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|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
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| 3 rd | uninterrupted duration | Bp. Williams |
| 4 th | amplitude | " Fowler |
| 5 th | Succession of Bishops | Gen. Thorpe |
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| 13 th | Confession of Arianism | Bp. Hadden |
| 14 th | Martyrdom and of Church Councils | Bp. Stratf |
| 15 th | Temporal Extent | Bp. Gore |

CARDINAL BELLARMINE'S
NOTES OF THE CHURCH
EXAMINED AND REFUTED.

Deposited

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. CLAY, BREAD STREET HILL.

CARDINAL BELLARMINE'S

✓
NOTES OF THE CHURCH

EXAMINED AND REFUTED:

IN

A SERIES OF TRACTS,

WRITTEN SEVERALLY BY

ARCHBP. TENISON.
BISHOP KIDDER.
BISHOP PATRICK.
BISHOP WILLIAMS.
BISHOP FOWLER.

BISHOP STRATFORD.
BISHOP GROVE.
DR. SHERLOCK.
DR. CLAGETT.
DR. SCOTT.

DR. THORPE.
DR. PAYNE.
DR. LINFORD.
DR. RESBURY.
DR. FREEMAN.

LONDON:
SAMUEL HOLDSWORTH, AMEN CORNER,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1840.



P R E F A C E.

IN one of those convincing, truly protestant, and logical masterpieces of eloquent reasoning, with which the intellectual public, not alone of Great Britain, but of the civilized world, is every day instructed—the leading article of *The Times* newspaper, on the 24th of last January—the following sentiments were expressed:—

“ From the swarms of the unsuspected emissaries of popery now in this kingdom—wearing all sorts of disguises—worming themselves into every social circle—conducting or suborning the liberal press—commanding access to families as teachers of French, Italian, German, painting, dancing, and music—many of them instilling their diluted poison as literary *redacteurs*, compilers of school-books, and penny magazine writers—and all of them working indefatigably, not only in disseminating a muffled Romanism, by means of tracts, historical perversions, and romantic tales, but in decoying the thoughtless and inexperienced to attend the imposing sensualities of popish worship—our persuasion, our strong persuasion is, that unless this abominable confederacy be seasonably defeated, all the highest hopes and energies of our country must eventually be trampled to the dust by the cloven hoof of Rome. It will not do to tell us that our apprehensions are merely visionary. Too well do we know the contrary. . . . And, accordingly, being thoroughly assured that this vile conspiracy against the religion, liberties, and property of England need only to be known in order to be defeated, we take every opportunity of unmasking these diabolical intrigues, and of placing before our country the evidences of its impending danger.

“ Fortunately, the ambitious designs and stealthy march of

Popery have lately called forth a number of distinguished writers, whose learning and abilities seem scarcely inferior to those of Archbishop Wake, and others, who gave that blow to the analogous struggles of Romanism under James II., from which it has taken a century and a half to recover. . . . There is one volume especially, which, though published so far back as 1687, appears to us preeminently adapted to the exigencies of the present time—a volume of tracts, contributed severally by Tennison, Patrick, Fowler, Sherlock, &c. entitled, “The Notes of the Church, as laid down by Bellarmine, examined and confuted.” We have read that volume (now very scarce) with great interest and admiration. It is written with rare argumentative power, as well as caustic wit; in fact it leaves “the mother of abominations” not a rag to cover her nakedness; and the reason we refer to it now is, to say, that if it were slightly modernized in style, a republication of these tracts, separately, in a cheap form, for general distribution, would furnish Protestants with an excellent defensive armoury, which even babes might profitably use.”

It was a dictum of Bellarmine, that “heretics (Protestants), when strong, were to be committed to God; when weak, to the executioner.” Bellarmine is a standard authority in the Irish Roman-catholic college of Maynooth; and it may be worth while to point out the singular, yet instructive analogy between this dictum of the great Romish *ecclesiastical* leader, Bellarmine, and the avowal of O’Connell, the great Romish *political* leader, made at a public dinner in Fermoy, Cork, about three months ago: “When we were weak we cringed to them (Protestants); now that we are strong we will kick and cuff them.” The truth is, and it is a melancholy truth, that in this empire the feeling of the vast majority of Papists is not one of gratitude for equalization of rights, conferred by the liberal and unsuspecting government of Great Britain in 1829, but of hostility and hatred to the name and existence of Protestantism.

Since the time of James II. the emissaries of Rome have not been so active in their conspiracy against the institutions of Protestantism as they are at present. Great

Britain especially is the theatre of these intrigues. As they well know the Church of England to be the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty, and of true Christianity, over the world, the whole force, ingenuity and fraud of the papacy have been precipitated upon her. Their arts are as subtle as they are manifold: they commence generally, by an assumption of liberality, to preach a species of Protestantism; to deny those semi-pagan doctrines that their church has superinduced on the first principles of Christianity; to profess reverence for the Bible, as the first, if not the only rule of faith; and to say, that the difference between Romanism and Protestantism is only on unessential points. Having thus at first fascinated their victim, they gradually coil round him till he falls, their poisoned prey. In the large towns, and thickly-peopled districts, where there are many ignorant or heedless persons, and a scarcity of Protestant instruction, they have made great havoc. As the Society of Jesuits embraces the most active, plausible, and unscrupulous of these conspirators, it is well to let the reader know what even catholic governments have thought of them. In 1759 they were expelled from Portugal. For what? Why for nothing else than "high treason." In 1764, from France, "because they were an *irreligious* and a dangerous political body." In 1767 they were banished from Naples, Spain, and Parma, for similar reasons. In 1773 the society was altogether suppressed by Pope Ganganeli, "as one unworthy of existence; cherishing an insatiable avidity of temporal possessions; propagating doctrines which were scandalous, and contrary to good morals."

The present Number, which forms the introduction only of these Tracts, was written by the famous Dr. Sherlock. He at first merely designed to give a refutation in general of Bellarmine's "Notes," or proofs; but there came out an elaborate pamphlet, under the highest Romish authority, as a reply. To this he published a rejoinder, which he has

called a "Vindication," and in which he scourges his illogical adversary in the most commanding fashion. To each of the remaining fifteen Tracts, which are written in a plainer style than the Tracts of the present Number, a Table of Contents will be given. No Index is given to the second Tract of the present Number, as it is merely an amplification of the first, and runs through the whole range of the various points of the controversy, which are taken methodically and in detail in the following Tracts. Pains have been taken, for the purpose of perspicuity, to modernize the style, without at all altering the mode or character of the argument.

NOTICE OF BELLARMINE.

CARDINAL ROBERT BELLARMINE, or Bellarmino, a Jesuit, and nephew of Pope Marcellus II., who was born in Tuscany in 1542, and died in Rome in 1621, was one of the most learned men, and (as is admitted by the Roman-catholic party) the most powerful controversialist in defence of popery, that the Romish church ever produced. In 1598 he was made cardinal. On his nomination Clement VIII. used these remarkable words: "We choose him because the church of God does not possess his equal in learning." In 1602 he was created archbishop of Capua. Having discharged the duties of this office for about four years, he was recalled to Rome by Paul V., who thought his great talents, learning, and zeal, could be better employed in the councils of the papacy. There he remained until his death. His works are very numerous; most of them written in Latin, in a style, though not very elegant or eloquent, yet clear and concise. His greatest work is his *Disputations, or Controversies*, concerning the Cardinal Points at issue between the Romish and Reformed Churches, in four vols. folio, in Latin; of which the fourth book in the second volume comprises his famous "*Notes (or Signs or Proofs) of the (true) Church;*" of which the present volume is an ample refutation.

His controversial works were not then, and have not since been considered as his own mere opinions, but as authorized vindications of the principles and doctrines of Popery, spiritual and temporal. They were revised, altered, and corrected in later editions, under the authority of the papal government; and now they stand as the most authentic and

genuine record of that twin spiritual and temporal power. So much importance was there attached to his works, that for nearly a century there was scarcely an eminent or learned protestant divine in Europe who did not publish answers to his ingenious and alluring sophisms. In England his tract on "The Notes (or Proofs) of the true Church," were considered so important, from the learning of the man, and their sly cajoling, and plausible character, that *fifteen* of the most distinguished ecclesiastics, including one archbishop and six bishops, published formal and elaborate refutations of them, each man taking a separate tract. These tracts were written in a style so masterly, and based on a foundation so undeniably secure, *i. e.* the Scriptures, that having been circulated rapidly and extensively among the thinking and independent population of England, they awakened the spirit of the nation, and were mainly instrumental in producing that tone of antipapistical feeling, that caused the overthrow of popery, and the ejection of James II. Some eminent men, among them the great Scaliger, have said, that Bellarmine did not believe what he asserted. This has been contradicted by his biographers and his party; and I think justly; for superstition, and a veneration for the long-established prerogatives of the papacy, were the most striking characteristics of his mind. At his death he bequeathed one half of his soul to the Virgin Mary, the other to Jesus Christ! (I quote from his eulogistic biographers.) He would not allow the gnats and vermin that tormented him to be killed, because "their present life was their only *paradise*, and it would be cruel to deprive them of it."

Now what will any dispassionate reader think of the humanity of a man who would not allow the killing of a gnat, or a bug, because the present life was its paradise, when he finds that this very man, in various elaborate treatises, (which were read by the educated in all Christendom, and produced, as they were designed to produce, a great effect), maintained that the Pope had the power, delegated from Heaven, of dethroning sovereign rulers, and changing dynasties and governments, the necessary consequence of

which must be bloodshed, rapine, violation, and every species of enormity that the unrestrained passions of men in revolutionary times produce?

Though no writer of the Romish church ever showed more zeal, or urged stronger arguments, to prove that the Pope possessed the power of deposing sovereign princes, yet his "Treatise about the Power of the Pope in Temporal Matters," while it was condemned by the catholic parliament of Paris, as dangerous to all civil government, and pushing the pretensions of the popedom to an extravagant excess, was placed by order of Sixtus V. among the condemned books in the catalogue of the Inquisition, because he asserted that the deposing power of the Pope was *indirect*, and *not direct*; i.e. because he did not sufficiently maintain the papal claim to universal despotism, as sanctioned by the immediate fiat of Heaven. It was often suggested to him that he would be raised to the pontifical chair. Of this promotion he appears to have had a strong dislike; and he has left registered a solemn vow, that if he were elected he would abolish the system of favouritism;—he had previously condemned the lax discipline and immorality of the monastic institutions. Henry IV. considering him the least objectionable of the candidates, wished for his election. On the first meeting of the conclave of Leo XI. he had a majority of votes. Again, in the conclave of Paul V. it was *seriously* designed by many to nominate him. But what was the obstruction, think you, reader?—why (and again I quote from his eulogistic biographer, a papist,) that he was *too honest*, and was a Jesuit. The objection to his honesty is intelligible enough, viz. that the old and necessary system of fraud, falsehood, intrigue, and corruption, would not be kept up in its pristine vigour under his reign; and the objection to his being a Jesuit meant, that the Jesuits were a body so closely banded, and so scheming and unscrupulous, that if they once seized the papal chair, they would ever retain it. His uncle, Marcellus II. one day exclaimed in his hearing, "I do not see how those sitting in this high place (the papal chair) can well be saved," alluding to the dishonest means by which the papal power was to be upheld.

Bellarmino, seeing that means as unholy were necessary to *rise* to as to *retain* the pontificate, said, in answer to the question, why so few cardinals were in the catalogue of saints, “Because they aspire to be most,” *i. e.* to be popes; which means, that the qualities necessary in a saint were at variance with those necessary in a good pope. These few incidents, which I find detailed by his admiring historians, Fugilati, Ancillon, Peter de St. Romauld, and Godeau, will be a fair index to any honest and reflecting man, of the nature and tendencies of such a system, which its advocates boast to be “unchanged and unchangeable.”

PART I.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE NOTES }
OF THE CHURCH } DR. SHERLOCK.

A VINDICATION OF THE SAME DR. SHERLOCK.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE
NOTES OF THE CHURCH;
WITH SOME
REFLECTIONS ON CARDINAL BELLARMINE'S NOTES.

BY DR. SHERLOCK.

IF Cardinal Bellarmine had not told us that this is a most profitable controversy,* I should very much have wondered at those pains which he and so many other great Romish divines have taken to find out the Notes of the Church. For is not the *Catholic* Church visible? And if we can see which is this church, what need we guess at it by marks and signs? And by such marks and signs too as are matter of dispute themselves! Cannot we distinguish between the Christian church, and a Turkish mosque, or Jewish synagogue, or Pagan temple? Cannot we, without all this parade, distinguish a Christian from a Turk, or a Jew, or a Pagan? And it will be as easy to find out a christian church, as it is to find out Christians; for a christian church is nothing else but a society of Christians united under christian pastors, for the worship of Christ; and wherever we find such a society as this, there is a christian church; and all such particular or national churches all the world over, make up the whole christian church, or the *universal* church of Christ.

But this will not do the Cardinal's business: though the christian church is visible enough, yet not such a church as he wants.

* Controv. tom. ii. l. iv. de Notis Ecclesiæ.

For since there are a great many christian churches in the world, as the Greek, the Armenian, the Abyssinian, the Roman church, he would find out which of these churches is the catholic church ; which after all their shuffles they can make no better sense of, than which of the parts is the whole.

Since there are many unhappy disputes amongst Christians, the use of Notes is to find out an *infallible* church, which must by an indisputable authority dictate to all other churches what they must believe, and what they must practise ; and to bring all other churches into subjection, they must find out a church, out of whose communion there is no pardon of sin, no eternal life to be had. That is, in short, the use of Notes is to prove the church of Rome to be the only *catholic* church, the only infallible oracle of faith, and final judge of controversies ; and that the promises of pardon of sin, and eternal life, are made only to the church of Rome, and to those other churches which are in subjection to her. Thus Bellarmine unriddles this matter, that the usefulness of this inquiry after the Notes of the true church, is, because “ in the true church only there is the true faith, the true remission of sins, the true hope of eternal salvation ;” * which is certainly true, that all this is to be had only in the true church of Christ. For there can be no true church without the true faith ; and no remission of sins, nor hope of salvation, out of the true church. But then all the churches in the world which profess the true faith of Christ, are such true churches. But this will not do the business either ; for it is not enough to know that every true church professes the true faith ; but we must find out that such a church *cannot err* in the faith, and has *authority* to correct the faith of all other churches ; and we must allow the *pardon of sin* and *eternal life*, to be had in no other church but this ; which is the only thing which can make such a church the mistress of all other churches ; and this church must be the church of Rome, or else the Cardinal is undone with all his notes and marks of the church.

The observing of this gives us the true state of this controversy ;

* “ Omnes enim continentur in sola vera Ecclesia esse veram Fidem, veram peccatorum remissionem, veram spem salutis æternæ.” — BEL. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, cap 1.

which is not what it is which makes a church a true church ; a thing necessary for all Christians to know, that they may take care that nothing be wanting in their communion, which is essential to a true church ; which is the only use of Notes that I know of : but the dispute is, how among all the divisions of Christendom, we may find out that only true church, which is the mistress of all other churches, the only infallible guide in matters of faith, and to which alone the promises of pardon and salvation are made ; and by some notes and characters of such a church, to prove that the church of Rome is that church. The first of these is what the Protestants intend in those notes they give of the true church ; to shew what it is which is essential to the being and constitution of a christian church ; for that, and none else, is a true church, which has all things essential to a true church. The second is, what the Papists intend by their Notes of a church to prove, that the church of Rome is the only true church : and some brief remarks upon both these ways, will abundantly serve for an introduction to a more particular examination of Cardinal Bellarmine's " Notes of the Church," which is the only design of these papers.

It is no wonder that Papists and Protestants differ so much about the Notes of the true church, since the questions which each of them intend to answer by their several Notes, so vastly differ. When you ask a Protestant " What are the Notes of a true Church ? " He answers to that question ; " What is essential to a true church ; or what makes a church a true church ? " that is, *what a true Church is* ; and examines the truth of his church by the essential marks and properties of a church. When you ask a Papist for Notes of a true church, he answers to that question, "Which is a true church ? " and thinks to point you out to a true church by some external marks and signs, without ever inquiring what is essential to a church ; and this he must of necessity do, according to his principles ; for he can know nothing of religion till he has found the church from which he must learn every thing else. Let us consider then which of these is most reasonable.

First, To begin with the Protestant way of finding out the church by the essential properties of a true church : such as the profession of the true christian faith, and the christian sacra-

ments rightly and duly administered by persons rightly ordained, according to the institutions of our Saviour, and the apostolical practice. This is essential to a true church ; for there can be no true christian church without the true christian faith, and christian sacraments, which cannot be rightly administered but by church-officers rightly and duly ordained. The regular exercise of discipline is not necessary to the being of the church, but to the purity and good government of it.

This is the sum of what the Protestants allege for the Notes of the true church, and these are as infallible notes of a true church, as human nature is of a man ; for they are the essential principles of it. By this every man may know whether he be a member of a true church or not ; for, where this is, there is a true church ; where this is not, there is no true church, whatever other marks of a church there be. And I know no other use of Notes, but to find out what we seek for.

In answer to such Notes as these, Cardinal Bellarmine objects three things.

1. That Notes, whereby we will distinguish certain things, must not be common to other things, but proper and peculiar to that of which they are notes. As if you would describe a man to me, whom I never saw, so as that I may know him when I meet him ; it is not enough to say that he has two hands, or two eyes, &c., because this is common to all men. And this, he says, is the fault of these our Notes : for, “ as for the sincere preaching of the truth, or the profession of the true christian faith,” this is common to all sects, at least, in their own opinion ; and the same may be said of the sacraments. All sects and professions of Christians, either have the true faith and sacraments, or at least think that they have so ; and therefore these marks cannot visibly distinguish the true church from any other sect of Christians.

Now I must confess, these Notes, as he well observes, are common to all christian churches, and were intended to be so ; and if this does not answer his design, we cannot help it. The Protestant churches do not desire to confine the Notes of the Church to their own private communions, but are very glad if all the churches in the world be as true churches as themselves. The whole catholic church, which consists of a great many particular

diocesan, or national churches, has the same nature ; and when the whole consists of univocal parts, every part must have the same nature with the whole : and therefore as he who would describe a man, must describe him by such characters as fit all mankind ; so he who gives the essential characters of a church, must give such notes as fit all true churches in the world. This indeed does not fit the church of Rome so as to make it the only *catholic*, and the only true church, nor do we intend it should ; but it fits *all true churches*, wherever they are, and that is much better.

To answer then his argument. When we give notes which belong to a whole species, as we must do when we give the notes of a true christian church (there being a great many true churches in the world which make up the *catholic* or universal church), we must give such notes as belong to the whole kind ; that is, to all true christian churches. And though these notes are common indeed to *all* true christian churches, yet they are proper and peculiar to *a* true christian church ; as the essential properties of a man are common to all men, but proper to mankind : and this is necessary to make them true notes ; for such notes of a true church as do not fit all true churches, cannot be true notes.

As for what the Cardinal urges, “ That all sects of Christians *think* themselves to have the true faith and true sacraments,” I am apt to think they do ; but what then ? If they *really* have not the true faith and true sacraments, they are not true churches, whatever they think of it ; and yet the true faith and true sacraments, are certain notes of a true church. A purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate ; but yet a purchase upon a title, which is not only thought to be, but is a good one, is a good estate. All that can be said in this case is, that men can be no more certain that they have a true church, than they are that they have a true faith, and true sacraments ; and this I readily grant. But as men’s mistake in this matter does not prove that *there is no* true faith nor true sacraments, so neither does it prove that a true faith and true sacraments *are not* notes of the true church.

2. The Cardinal’s second objection is, “ That the Notes of anything must be more known than the thing itself ;” which we readily

grant. "Now," says he, "which is the true church, is more knowable than which is the true faith:" and this we deny; and that for a very plain reason; because the true church cannot be known without knowing the true faith: for no church is a true church which does not profess the true faith. We may as well say that we can know a horse, without knowing what the shape and figure of a horse is, which distinguishes it from all other creatures, as that we can know a christian church, without knowing what the christian faith is, which distinguishes it from all other churches: or, we may as well say that we can know any thing without knowing what it is, since the very essence of a true church consists in the true faith, which, therefore, must be first known, before we can know the true church.

But the Cardinal urges, "That we cannot know what true Scripture is; nor what is the true interpretation of Scripture, but from the church; and therefore we must know the church before we can know the true faith." As for the first, I readily grant that at this distance from the writing the books of the New Testament, there is no way to assure us that they were written by the apostles or apostolical men, and owned for inspired writings, but the testimony of the church in all ages. But herein we do not consider them as a *church*, but as *credible witnesses*. Whether there can be any such thing as a church, or not, we can know only by the Scriptures. But without knowing whether there be a church or not, if we know that for so many hundred years these books have been owned to be written by such men, and have been received from the apostles' days till now by all who call themselves Christians; this is as good an historical proof as we can have for any thing; and it is the authority of an uninterrupted tradition, not the authority of the church considered as a church, which moves us to believe them: for, setting aside the authority of tradition, how can the authority of a company of men, who call themselves the church, before I know whether there be any church, move me to believe any thing which was done sixteen hundred years ago? But there is a company of men in the world, and have been successively for sixteen hundred years (whether they be a church, or not, is nothing to this question), who assure me, that these books which we call the *Scriptures*, were written

by such inspired men, and contain a faithful account of what Christ did, and taught, and suffered ; and therefore I believe such books ; and from them I learn what that true faith is which makes a true christian church.

As for the true interpretation of Scripture, that we cannot understand what it is without the church ; this I also deny. The Scriptures are very intelligible to honest and diligent readers, in all things necessary to salvation ; and if they be not, I desire to know how we shall find out the church ; for certainly the church has no charter but what is in the Scripture : and then if we must believe the church before we can believe or understand the Scriptures, we must believe the church before we can possibly know whether there be a church or not. If we prove the church by the Scripture, we must believe and understand the Scripture before we can know the church. If we believe and understand the Scriptures upon the authority and interpretation of the church, considered as a church, then we must know the church before the Scripture. The Scripture cannot be known without the church, nor the church without the Scripture, and yet one of them must be known first ; yet neither of them can be known first, according to these principles ; which is such an absurdity, as all the art of the world can never palliate.

3. The Cardinal's third objection is, " That the true Notes of the Church must be inseparable from it ;" whereas the churches of Corinth and Galatia did not always teach true doctrine, some of the church of Corinth denying the resurrection, and the Galatians warping towards Judaism : and the church of Corinth being guilty of great miscarriages in their mode of receiving the Lord's Supper ; and yet they were owned for true churches by the apostles : an argument which much became the Cardinal to use, it being the best evidence I know of for the church of Rome being a true church, that every corruption in faith and sacraments do not unchurch ; but how this proves that true faith and true sacraments are not an essential note and character of a true church, I cannot guess. I would desire any one to tell me for him, whether a corrupt faith and false sacraments be the notes of a true church ; or whether it be no matter as to the nature of a church, what our faith and sacraments are.

Secondly, Let us now consider the Cardinal's way, by some certain marks and notes, to find out which is the true church, before we know what a true church is: to pick out of all the churches in the world, one church, which we must own for the only true church, and reject all other churches which do not subject themselves to this one church: to find out such a church, on whose authority we must rely for the whole christian faith; and in whose communion only pardon of sin is to be had. That this is the use of notes in the church of Rome, I have already shewn you; and truly they are very pretty things to be proved by notes; as to consider them particularly:—

1. To find out which is the true church, before we know what a true church is. This, methinks, is not a natural way of inquiry, but is like seeking for we know not what. There are two inquiries in order of nature before that, “Which is the true church?” viz. first, whether there be a true church or not; and, second, what it is. The first of these the Cardinal takes for granted, that there is a church; but I will not take it for granted, but desire these note-makers to give me some notes to prove that there is a church. There is indeed a great deal of talk and noise in the world about a church, but that is no proof that there is a church; and yet it is not a self-evident proposition, that there is a church, and therefore it must be proved. Now that *there is* a church, must be proved by notes, as well as *which* is this true church; or else the whole design of notes is lost: and I would gladly see those notes, which prove that there is a church, before we know what a church is. To understand the mystery of this, we must briefly consider the reason and use of notes in the church of Rome. According to the Popish resolution of faith into the authority of the church, the first thing we must know is, which is the *true church*; for we must receive the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them, and the whole christian faith and worship, from the church; and therefore can know nothing of religion till we have found the church. The use then of notes is to find out the church before, and without the Scriptures; for if they admit of a scripture-proof, they must allow that we can know and understand the Scriptures without the authority or interpretation of the church, which undermines the very foundation of Popery. Now I first desire to know

how they will prove, that there is a church without the Scripture? That, you will say, is visible of itself, for we see a christian church in the world; but what is it I see? I see a company of men who call themselves a church, and this is all that I can see: and is this seeing a church? A church must have a divine original and institution; and therefore there is no seeing a church without seeing its charter; for there can be no other note or mark of the *being* of a church, but the *institution* of it.

And this proves that we cannot know that there is a church, without knowing in some measure what this church is; for the charter which founds the church, must declare the nature and constitution of it, what its faith and worship, and laws and privileges are. But now these essential characters of a church must not be reckoned by the Romanists among the notes of a church, for then we must find out the true church by the true faith, and the true worship; not the true faith by the true church, which destroys Popery.

Hence it is, that these note-makers never attempt to give us any notes, whereby we shall know that there is a church, or what this church is: for there are no notes of these, but such as they dare not give, viz. the authority of the Scriptures, and every man's private judgment of the sense and the interpretation of them; for at least till we have found a church, we must judge for ourselves, and then the authority of the church comes too late; for we must first judge upon the whole of religion, if we must find out a true church by the true faith, before we can know the true church; and we cannot rely on her authority, before we know her; and therefore they take it for granted that there is a church, which they can never prove in their way, and attempt to give some notes whereby to know which is the church; and then learn what the church is, from the church herself; which is like giving marks whereby to know an unicorn, before I know whether there be an unicorn or not, or what it is.

2. Another blunder in this dispute about notes is, that they give us notes whereby to find out the true *catholic* church, before we know what a *particular* church is. For all Bellarmine's Notes are intended only for the *catholic* church; and therefore his first note is the "Name Catholic;" whereas the *catholic* church is

nothing else but *all* true christian churches in the world, united together by one common faith and worship, and such acts of communion as distinct churches are capable of, and obliged to. Every particular church which professes the true faith and worship of Christ, is a true christian church; and the catholic church embraces all the true christian churches in the world: which have all the same nature, and are in some sense of the same communion: so that it is as impossible to know what the catholic church is, before we know what a particular church is, as it is to know what the sea is, before we know what water is. Every true, single, particular church has the whole and entire nature of a church, and would be a true church, though there were no other church in the world; as the christian church at Jerusalem was, before any other christian churches were planted; and therefore there can be no other notes of a true church, but what belong to every true particular church; and they can be nothing but what are essential to a church, and what all true christian churches in the world agree in, viz. the true faith and worship of Christ.

Now, so far as Bellarmine's Notes belong to every true particular church, so far we allow them; and let the church of Rome make the best of them she can; for we doubt not to make our claim to them, as good, and much better than her's; but he has named very few such. I quote the *sixth*, "The agreement and consent in doctrine with the ancient and apostolic church," which is the same with his second note concerning *antiquity*, which must refer to the antiquity of its doctrine; for an ancient church, though founded many years since, if it have innovated in doctrine, cannot plead antiquity; and a church founded but yesterday, which professes the ancient faith, may: and the *eighth*, "The holiness of its doctrine," are the chief, if not the only notes of this nature; and these we will stand and fall by. Many of his other are not properly the notes of a true church, any otherwise than as they are testimonies of the truth of common Christianity, which is professed by all true churches; and if they are notes of the church, so every true particular church has a share in them. Such is his *ninth*, "The efficacy of doctrine." The *tenth*, "The holiness of the lives of the first authors and fathers of our religion;" and I suppose the holiness of Christ and his apostles gave testimony

to the truth of common Christianity, and therefore to all churches who profess the common faith once delivered to the saints. The *eleventh*, "The glory of miracles," which also proves the truth of christian religion; and I hope a little better than popish miracles do transubstantiation. The *twelfth* is, "The spirit of prophecy," which, as far as it is a good note, belongs to the religion, not to the church. Other notes he assigns, which I doubt not will prove no notes at all, as the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, because they are not always true, and at best uncertain.

His *third* and *fourth* notes are *not notes of a church*, but *God's promises* made to his church: as of a long duration, that it shall never fail, and amplitude or extent, and multitude of believers. These promises we believe God will fulfil to his church; but they can be no notes, which is the true church. For the first of these can never be a note until the day of judgment. That church which shall never be destroyed is the true church, but a bare long continuance is no mark of a true church; for an apostolical church may continue, by the patience and forbearance of God, many hundred years, and be destroyed at last; and then this argument of a long duration is confuted. And as for amplitude and extent, that is not to distinguish one christian church from another, that the most numerous church should be the truest; but to distinguish the christian church from all other religions; and then I doubt this prophecy has not received its just accomplishment yet; for though we take in all the christian churches in the world, and not exclude the greatest part of them, as the church of Rome does, yet they bear but a small proportion to the rest of the world.

And now there are but three of his fifteen Notes of the Church left. The first, concerning the name *catholic*, which makes every church a catholic church, which will call itself so: though catholic does not declare what a church is, but in what communion it is; and is no note of a true church, unless it be first proved that they are true churches which are in communion with each other: for if three parts in four of all the churches in the world were very corrupt and degenerate in faith and worship, and were in one communion, this would be the most catholic communion, as catholic signifies the most general and *universal*; but

yet the fourth part, which is sincere, would be the best and truest church, and the catholic church, as that signifies the communion of all orthodox and pure churches.

His fifth Note is, "The succession of bishops in the church of Rome, from the apostles till now." This is a note of the Roman church. Now the succession of bishops in the Greek church, is as good a note of the Greek church. And any churches which have been later planted, who have bishops in succession from any of the apostles or apostolical bishops, by this note, are as good churches as they. So that this is a note common to all true churches, and therefore can do the church of Rome no service.

His seventh Note indeed is home to his purpose: "That that is the only true church, which is united to the bishop of Rome, as to its head." If he could prove this, it must do his business without any other notes; but that will be examined hereafter. But it is like the confidence of a Jesuit, to make that the note of the church, which is the chief subject of the dispute.

The sum is this: there can be no notes of a true church, but what belong to all true churches; for though there is but one *catholic* church, yet there are a great many true *particular* churches, which make up this *catholic* church, as homogeneal parts, which have all the same nature. But now very few of the Cardinal's Notes belong to *all* true churches; and those which do so, signify nothing to his purpose, because they are common to more churches than the church of Rome. And as for the catholic church, that is known only by particular churches; for it is nothing else, but the union of all true churches in faith and worship, and one communion, as far as distinct churches at a great distance are capable of it: and therefore there is no other way to know which is the catholic church, but by knowing all the true churches in the world, which either are in actual communion with one another, or are in a disposition for it, whenever occasion is offered; for it is impossible that all true christian churches, all the world over, should ever join in any visible and external acts of communion. Therefore, though we know and believe that there is a catholic church, because we are assured that all true churches in the world are but one church, the one

body and spouse of Christ ; yet it is next to impossible to know all the parts of the catholic church (without which we cannot know the whole catholic church), because we cannot know all the particular true churches all the world over. Nor indeed is there any need we should ; for we may certainly know, which is a truly *catholic* church, without knowing the whole *catholic* church. For every church which professes the true catholic faith, and imposes only *catholic* terms of communion, and is ready, out of the principles of brotherly love and charity (that cement of catholic communion) to communicate with all churches, and to receive all churches to her communion upon these terms, is a truly *catholic* church ; which shows how ridiculous it is to make the catholic church our first inquiry, and to pretend to give notes to find out the true *catholic* church by, before we know what a true particular church is. But the mystery of this will appear more in what follows.

Thirdly. For another mystery of finding the true church by notes, is to pick, out of all the christian churches in the world, one church, which we must own for the only *catholic* church ; and reject all other churches as heretical, or schismatical, or un-catholic churches, who refuse obedience and subjection to this *one catholic church*. For if this be not the intent of it, what will all the notes of the church signify to prove, that the church of Rome is the only true catholic church ? And if they do not prove this, the Cardinal has lost his labour. For though the notes he assigns were the notes of a true church, yet they may, and must belong to all other true churches, as well as to the church of Rome ; unless he can prove that there is but one true church, or but one church, which is the mistress of all other churches, and the only principle and centre of catholic unity. And this ought to have been proved first, before he had thought of the Notes of the Church.

So that there are many things to be proved here, before we are ready for the Notes of the Church. They must first prove, that there is but one true church in the world : for though we all grant, that there is but *one catholic church*, yet we say, there may be, and hope, nay more than this, know that there are many true churches, which make up the catholic church. Yet before the Notes of a true church can do any service to the church of

Rome, they must prove that there is but one true church in the world ; and then it will signify something to prove the church of Rome to be that true church. They must prove also, that the catholic church does not signify all the particular true churches that are in the world ; but some *one* church, which is the fountain of *catholic unity* ; which all other churches are bound to submit to, and communicate with, if they will be members of the catholic church. For though all the churches in the world were in subjection to that church, yet by its professed doctrines, they receive their catholicism from their communion with that church ; and therefore that only is the *catholic* church. It is not merely the communion of all churches together, which makes the catholic church ; but it is the subjection of all churches to that one *catholic* church, which makes them catholic : so that they must prove that there is one particular church, which is the *catholic* church ; that is, that a part is the whole ; that one particular church is all the churches of the world ; for so the *catholic* church signifies in ancient writers. This is so absurd, that some of our modern advocates for the catholic church of Rome tell us, that they do not mean the particular diocese of Rome by the catholic church, but all those churches which are in communion with the church of Rome. But suppose this ; yet it is only the church of Rome which makes all the other churches catholic, and therefore she only is the catholic church. And I will presently make them confess it to be so : for let us suppose, that no other churches should submit themselves to the church of Rome (by the church of Rome, understanding the particular diocese of Rome), would she be the catholic church or not ? If, notwithstanding this, she would be the catholic church, then it is evident that they make the particular church of Rome the catholic church ; if she would not, then I cannot see how communion with the church of Rome is essential to the catholic church.

These things, I say, ought to have been proved before the Cardinal had given us the Notes of the Church ; for it is a hard thing to prove by notes that the particular church of Rome is the only *catholic* church, till it be proved that a particular church may be the catholic church, or that there is one particular church, which is the catholic church. This he knew we all deny ; and it is a ridiculous thing to think to convince us, by

notes, that the church of Rome is the particular *catholic* church, when we deny that there is any such church, and affirm that it is a contradiction to own it : as great a contradiction as it is to say, that a *particular* church is the *universal* church.

Fourthly. But when I consider the further design of these note-makers, to find out such a church on whose authority we must rely for the whole christian faith, even for the Holy Scriptures themselves, it makes me more admire, that they should think this could be done by some notes of a church, especially by such notes as the Cardinal gives us.

For, suppose he had given us the notes of a true church, which is the utmost he can pretend to, before we can hence conclude that this church is the infallible guide, and uncontrollable judge of controversies, we must be satisfied, that the true church is infallible. This, indeed, Bellarmine attempts to prove in his third Book of the Church ; and it is not my concern at present to inquire how he proves it. But I am sure this can never be proved but by Scripture ; for, unless Christ have bestowed infallibility on the church, I know not how we can prove she has it ; and whether Christ have done it or not, can never be known but by the Scriptures : so that a man must believe the Scriptures and use his own judgment to understand them, before it can be proved to him that there is an infallible church ; and therefore, those who resolve the belief of the Scriptures into the authority of the church, cannot, without great impudence, urge the authority of the Scriptures to prove the church's infallibility ; and yet thus they all do ; nay, prove their very notes of the church from Scripture, as the Cardinal does : and think this is no arguing in a circle either, because we heretics believe the Scriptures without the authority of their church, and therefore are willing to dispute with them out of the Scriptures. But this is a fault on our side, and when we dispute with them, whatever we do at other times, we should not believe the Scriptures till they proved them to us their way, by the authority of their church ; and then we should quickly see what blessed work they would make of it. How they would prove their church's infallibility, and what fine notes we should have of a church, when we had rejected all their scripture-proofs, as we ought to do, till they have first satisfied us that theirs is the only true infallible church,

upon whose authority we must believe the Scriptures, and every thing else. I confess, I would gladly hear what notes they would give a Pagan to find out the true infallible church by.

It is certainly a most senseless thing to resolve all our faith into the authority of the church, as if the church were the first object of our faith in religion; whereas it is demonstrable, that we must know and believe most of the articles of the christian faith, before we can know whether there be any church or not. The order observed in the Apostles' Creed is a plain evidence of this, for all those articles which are before the holy catholic church, must in order of nature be known before it. That there is a God, who made the world; that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; and descended into hell; that he rose again the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; and then we may add the Holy Catholic Church, and not till then. For the church is a society of men for the worship of God, through the faith of Jesus Christ, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, which unites them into one mystical body: so that we must know Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before we can know what the *catholic* church means. And is it not strange then, that our faith must be founded on the authority of the church, when we must first know all the great articles of our faith, before we can know any thing about a church? This inverts the order of our Creed, which, according to the principles of the church of Rome, should begin thus: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and upon the authority of that church I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." And no doubt but the apostles, or those apostolical men who framed the Creed, would have put it so, had they thought the whole christian faith must be resolved into the authority of the church.

This short Discourse, I think, is enough in general concerning the Notes of the Church; and I shall leave the particular examination of Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes to other hands, which the reader may expect to follow in their order.

A VINDICATION
OF THE
BRIEF DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH,
IN ANSWER TO A LATE PAMPHLET,
ENTITLED
"THE USE AND GREAT MOMENT OF THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH, AS
DELIVERED BY CARDINAL BELLARMINE, 'DE NOTIS ECCLESIE,'
JUSTIFIED."
BY DR. SHERLOCK.

WHEN we are almost tired with grave and serious disputes, it is very comfortable to meet with a pleasant and diverting adversary, who serves instead of a *prævaricator*,* or *terræ filius*, to refresh and recruit our spirits with a scene of mirth. And though this *Justifier of Bellarmine's Notes* looks very demurely, and argues very logically, and seems to be in very good earnest, yet a Merry Andrew will be a Merry Andrew still, though he be dressed up in the habit of a philosopher; and therefore I must beg my reader's pardon, if I cannot forbear smiling sometimes; though, to pay due respect to my adversary, and to maintain a just decorum, I will do it very gravely too.

He begins very movingly. "The world is come to a fine pass, when it shall as good as deny Christ's one holy catholic church."

* *Prævaricator* was properly an advocate who betrayed the cause he engaged to defend, and hence damaged rather than served it. *Terræ filius*, or son of earth, a low ignorant fellow, a clown.

This is very wicked indeed ! But who are these miscreants, that dare do such a thing ? A company of senseless wretches, who deny Christ's church, and yet confess, " that there is no remission of sins, or eternal salvation out of it ! " Then I suppose, they are men who do not care much for salvation, nor sense : for to deny a church, out of which they confess there is no salvation, is to resolve to be damned ; and to say, that salvation is not to be had out of the church, and yet that Christ has no such church, deserves damnation, as much as nonsense does. And therefore I suppose by " as good," he does not mean that they altogether deny it, but do something as good, or rather as bad as that ; but what this should be, I cannot guess, unless it be to deny the Roman-catholic church to be this one holy catholic church of Christ ; and that indeed is a very sad thing too. And " they seek to baffle those, who by prayer and guidance of God's good Spirit, search to find it out ; " *i. e.* they confute Bellarmine's Notes of a Church, and that must be confessed to be a very sad thing also, and " as good as denying Christ's one holy catholic church."

Well ! Cardinal " Bellarmine (after others) hath to very good purpose lent his helping *hand*, to show us the city built on a hill." But it had been better he had lent us his *eyes* ; for Protestants see with their eyes, and not with their hands ; and notwithstanding his pointing to it, we cannot see what he would show us, unless it be the church built on *seven hills*.

But this is all " to little purpose with the obstinate, who will not agree either what the church is, or what a note may be." This is unpardonable obstinacy, that we desire the Cardinal, or any one for him, first to tell us *what* a true church is, before he tells us *which* is the true church ; to explain the *nature*, before he gives us the *external notes* and marks of a church ; which is as unreasonable as to ask what a *hind*, and a *panther* is, before we ask of what colour they are, whether white or spotted : and who would think any one should be so perverse as to ask what a note is ? which our author will give us a learned definition of presently.

The *Discourser* has said, that " a church is a society of Christians, united under christian pastors for the worship of Christ ; and wherever we find such a society as this, there is a christian church ; and all such particular or national churches, all

the world over, make up the whole christian church, or the universal church of Christ." That is (says the *Justifier*), "whatsoever therefore is the denomination of believers, Abyssinian, or Armenian, Greek, Roman;" let us add, Lutheran, Calvinist, with a wide &c., "they are each of them churches of Christ" (suppose this, of which more presently, and if *we* allow the Roman, *they* may modestly allow *all the rest*); "and the church universal is nothing else but the aggregate, or *omnium gatherum*" (very elegantly!) "of all such professions." And what then? the church universal is made up of all particular churches. What then, do you say? Why pray, consider, whoever thou art, good reader, "the church catholic, consisting of all nations, Jew and Gentile, and therefore primarily called catholic" (and therefore not from their union to the bishop of Rome, as the head of catholic unity), "had its plantation by our blessed Lord and his apostles, in one faith and one communion, antecedently to all such divisions that now or then were made by the craft and policy of Satan." A notable observation this!—that the faith and communion of the church was one, before it was divided: what then? "and therefore far is the universal church from being an aggregate of all such breaches of faith and charity." An *aggregate of breaches*, an union of divisions, may possibly be as good a church as it is sense. But though breaches cannot very well be aggregated, it is possible that two divided churches may both belong to the one body of Christ, as quarrelling brethren may still be the children of the same father, and owned by him too, though corrected and punished for their quarrels. Churches consist of men, who are liable to mistakes and passions, and therefore may quarrel and separate from each other, while they are both united to Christ in faith and worship. For though the bishops, and pastors, and members of distinct and co-ordinate churches, ought to maintain a brotherly correspondence, and exercise all acts of communion that distant churches are capable of with each other, upon account of that common relation they all have to Christ, in whom they are united into one body; and though our common Head will exact a severe account of those who cause divisions; yet, if such divisions happen, as separate us from each other, but do not divide us from Christ, each church may continue a true church still, and belong to the

one mystical body of Christ, though there may be some scandalous breaches and divisions among them. What is it then that unites any church to Christ, but the true faith and worship of Christ? And if contending churches may both retain the true christian faith and worship, at least in such a degree as *not* to be *unchurched*, though the *external* peace of the church is broken, (which is a very great crime, and will fall heavy upon the authors of it), yet, if they both belong to Christ, this “aggregate of breaches, and *omnium gatherum* of professions,” as our author very wittily expresses it, may be united in Christ’s mystical body. For though they fling one another out of the church, our common Saviour may chastise their follies, but own them both, as, in such a divided state of Christendom, we have great reason to hope he will.

But let us hear what our author says is the catholic church : “It is only a comprehension of all those churches which keep to the unity of the faith, and persist in their first undivided estate in the bond of universal peace.” By “the unity of the faith,” I hope he means that one faith, in which, as he tells us, Christ and his apostles planted the church. Then I think this will fall hard upon the church of Rome, which rejects all other churches who retain this one apostolic faith, if they disown the new articles of the Trent Creed. Now the first undivided estate of the church was settled in an equality and brotherly association of bishops and churches, not in the empire of one over all the rest ; and then this is more severe upon the church of Rome, than Protestants desire ; for she has destroyed this first undivided state, by challenging such a supremacy as enslaves all other churches to her, and therefore is so far from being the one catholic church, that if this definition be true, she is no part of it : and as for “the bond of universal peace,” what claim she can lay to that, let the cruel persecutions of those innocent Christians, whom she calls heretics,—the excommunication of whole churches—the deposing of princes—and all the blood that has been shed in Christendom under the banners of holy church, witness for her.

And thus we come to the notion of a *Note* or *mark*, which he says, “is clear by its definition ;” and therefore I hope he will give us such a definition as is self-evident, or which all mankind agree in ; for a definition which the contending parties do

not agree in, can clear nothing. Let us then hear his definition : " That it is a most sensible appearance in or about the subject inquired after, whereby we are led toward the knowledge of the present existence or essence of the said subject." And from hence he concludes, " It is manifest then, that a note of a thing must be extra-essential of itself, because by it, and the light from thence, we arrive to the knowledge of the essence." And he adds, " upon which grounds you see the reasonable demands of those who challenge, first, that a distinctive mark or note must be more known than the thing notified : secondly, that a note must be in conjunction at least, in some measure proper, not common or indifferent to many singulars, much less to contraries."

Now all that I can pick out of this, is, 1. That the existence or essence of things must be known by notes. 2. That such notes whereby we discover the existence or essence of things, must be extra-essential, or not belong to the essence of it. And yet, 3. That the note must *not* be *common*, but *proper* to the thing of which it is a note. Which are as pretty notions as a man shall ordinarily meet with ! and therefore I shall briefly examine them.

First, That the existence or essence of things must be known *by* notes. Now if the existence and essence of things *may* be known *without* notes, this dispute about notes is to no purpose. How many things are there whose existence and essence are known without notes ! Who desires any note to know the sun by ?—to know what light, or taste, or sounds, pain, or pleasure is ? The presence of these objects, and the notice our senses gives us of them, that is, the things themselves, are the only notice of themselves. The use of signs or notes, is only to discover the existence of such things as are absent, invisible, or future ; but what is present and visible, exposed to the notice of sense or reason, is best known by itself, and can be rightly known no other way ; and therefore, since all the dispute is about *marks* of the church, he ought to prove, that the church is such a society as can be known only by notes, and then it must either be absent, invisible, or future ; for all other things may be known by themselves without notes.

Secondly, That he will allow nothing to be a note but what is

extra-essential, or does not belong to the essence of the thing ; which seems to me a very extraordinary way of finding out the existence or essence of things by such notes as do not belong to their essence : and then I think they cannot prove their existence. For how can I find out any thing, without knowing in some measure what it is I find ? Or, how can I know what the essence of any thing is by such notes as are not essential ? There are but two sorts of Notes, or signs, that I know of, natural, and instituted ; and from both it is to be supposed that we know the thing, and the note and sign of it, before we can find it out by signs or notes. As for natural signs, the most certain signs we have are causes and effects, but we must know both the causes and effects, before the one can be a sign of the other. Thus smoke is a sign of fire ; but it is no sign of fire to any man who does not know what fire is, and that it will cause smoke when it seizes on combustible matter, and that nothing else can cause smoke but fire. Thus in univocal effects, the effect declares the nature of the cause ; as we know that a man had a man to his father, but then we must first know what a man is, and that a man begets in his own likeness. But this I suppose is not our author's meaning, that the notes of the church are natural causes and effects, or natural concomitants or adjuncts, because the church is not a natural but a mystical body, and therefore can have no natural notes.

Let us then consider instituted signs, and they, we grant, must be extra-essential ; but then there never was, and never can be an instituted sign to discover the essence and existence of what we did not know before : the use of such signs is to distinguish places or persons, by different names, or habits, or colours, &c. ; or to serve instead of words, as the sound of the trumpet, or the beat of the drum ; or to be for legal contracts and securities, and the like : but instituted signs are no signs, till we know the thing of which they are signs ; which shows how ridiculous it is to talk of such extra-essential notes as shall discover the existence and essence of things which we knew not before ; for if we must first know the church before we can find it out by notes, these extra-essential notes may be spared. To be sure this shows how far this definition of a note is from being clear, since it does not suit any kind of notes which mankind are acquainted with ; and if the notes of the

church are a peculiar sort of notes by themselves, he should not have appealed to the common notion and definition of signs and notes, because there are no other notes like them.

Thirdly, he adds, That these notes must not be common to other things, but proper to the thing of which it is a note. Now I defy him to show any such extra-essential notes in nature, which are not common to other things : for what in logic we call *propria*, do immediately result from the nature of things, and therefore are not extra-essential notes ; nay, are no notes at all to find out the essence or existence of things by ; for we must first know what the nature, and essence of things is before we can know their essential properties ; and as for inseparable accidents, how inseparable soever they are from such a thing, yet they may be common to other things ; and then by his own rule they cannot be notes.

But this is not the case, as I observed before, for the church is not a natural but a mystical body, and therefore its *nature* depends upon its *institution* ; and though in natural beings we may distinguish between the essence and the essential properties, yet where *institution alone is nature*, whatever is made proper, necessary, and inseparable by institution, is of the nature of it ; and there is therefore no distinction, that I know of, between the essence and essential properties. In natural beings, we call that the nature and form, and essence of the thing, by which every thing is what it is, and without which it would cease to be that kind of being which now it is ; as rationality is of the essence of a man, for man is a reasonable creature, and without a principle of reason he cannot be a man. Now in allusion to natural beings, we apply the same terms to matters of institution, and call that the nature and essence of a church, without which, according to the laws of its institution, it would not be a church. And therefore whatever by institution is so proper and peculiar to, and inseparable from a church, that without which it cannot be a church, is of the nature and essence of the church, and not an extra-essential property, which indeed is nonsense. The keeping in view of this one distinction between nature and institution, will overthrow this whole doctrine of “The Notes of the Church.” For,

1. There can be no note of an institution but the institution itself : notes must draw their signification either from nature or institu-

tion: there can be no natural notes of an institution which is the effect not of nature, but of the Divine will; and therefore if there be any, they must be instituted notes, that is, the institution of the church must be the mark or note whereby to know it; unless we will say, that there must be a second institution to be the notes of the first; and by the same reason there must be a third to be the notes of the second; and there will be no place to stop at, unless we stop at the first institution, which needs no other notes to prove itself by.

2. That in matters of institution there is no distinction between nature and properties. In natural beings indeed there is a distinction between the nature and properties of things, because there are some properties which, by a natural causality, spring from nature, as risibility from rationality. But now in matters of institution, one part of the institution is not the natural cause of the other; but the whole institution, and every part of it, immediately depends upon the will and pleasure of God: and therefore there can be no extra-essential properties of a church; but whatever is proper and inseparable by a divine institution, is the essence of the church; for it has no other nature and essence but its institution.

3. Hence it evidently follows, that there can be no extra-essential notes of a church; that nothing can be a note of a church, but what is essential to it by institution; for whatever institution makes proper and necessary, it makes essential. I confess this is a very improper way of speaking, to call the nature and essence of any thing the note of it; for a note or sign ought to be different and distinct from the thing shown or signified by it; and thus we ought roundly to deny that there are any notes of a church, or that the church can be found out by notes; but the Protestants, in compliance with the popish way of speaking, called that the note of the church which is not properly note and sign, but the rule and standard of the church, by which all societies of men, which pretend to be christian churches, are to be tried. And it is certain there can be no other rule or standard of the church but its institution, as to faith, and worship, and government. Common sense will tell us that there is no way to try an instituted society but by the rules of its institution: that church which conforms

to the original rule and standard of its institution, is a true church, and every church is more or less corrupt, as it varies from it : and here we ought to fix the controversy, that the church is not to be found out by notes, but to be tried by the rule of its institution ; and then farewell to Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes, which, I believe, he himself, though a Jesuit, would not have had confidence to say belonged to the institution of a church.

In the next place he says, " I have reckoned up the Cardinal's Notes, now here, now there, piecemeal, but durst not let them pass by in their majestic train, lest the reader, with Saba's queen, should be dazzled at the glory, transported as she was, that there was no life in her." If rhetoric would do the business we were certainly undone, and should have no more life left than the queen of Sheba : but the truth is, the Cardinal's Notes may possibly lose something of their majesty when they are shown by heretics ; and there is no help for that : but as for their train, to supply the defects of the *Discourser*, they have been since shown in very good order, and we live still : but whether they be *triumphant notes still of the church-militant*, as he calls them, is somewhat doubtful ; and indeed it seems somewhat unreasonable that the notes should be triumphant while the church is militant ; though triumph it seems they do over some slavish and servile minds ; but their triumph would be very short, were not the church so *militant* as it is.

But as if there were some charm in this majestic train, nothing will serve him but to reckon them up in their order ; and I must confess he has given such a new grace and majesty to them, that I believe Bellarmine himself could not know them again.

First. " The name catholic, how sacred to all those who own any of the three creeds, really and veritably !" O, how sacred indeed ! For heretics themselves own and claim the name.

Secondly. " Its antiquity, how indubitable, and above all suspicion of novelty !" Yes, yes ; antiquity is not novelty, but a pretence to antiquity may be : for how old is the Council of Trent, which is the true antiquity of many Popish articles of faith ?

Thirdly. " Perpetual duration, outlasting all earthly empires and kingdoms ;" for it plucks them down as fast as it can.

Fourthly. "Amplitude ; being a great body according to prophecy." But not so big as Paganism yet.

Fifthly. "Succession apostolical, the very Jews confessing it:" as they do transubstantiation!—"How strong, invincible, clear, and undeniable by gainsayers!" Then I suppose it has no gainsayers, if they do not deny it.

Sixthly. "Primitive consent, how great and how manifest to those good men who inquire!" Yea, how great indeed! for no body can find it but the vicar of Putney.—"Witness the multitudes that return to the catholic church upon that account." Monsieur de Meaux's French converts, I suppose, who never heard of the dragoons.

Seventhly. "Intimate union with their Head Christ, and with one another." But Bellarmine's visible head of unity is the Pope, not Christ: so that this is a new note, and it seems the church's union with Christ is extra-essential also, or else it could be no note.

Eighthly. "Sanctity of doctrine, as revealed by God, in whom is light, and no darkness at all." In teaching men to break faith with heretics; to depose heretical princes, and absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and arm them against their liege lord; to prefer the celibacy of priests (though the manifest cause of so many adulteries and fornications) as a more holy state than matrimony; and such like doctrines, wherein is darkness, but no light at all.

Ninthly. "Efficacy upon infidels." Witness the Spanish converts in the golden Indies. But why not upon heretics as well as infidels? I fear the conversions in England are so slow, that he dares not yet make that a mark of the church.

Tenthly. "The holiness of the fathers; whose lives we wish to be legends, though unquestionably true, when we see how far they have outdone us." Aye! that makes heretics call them legends, [lying stories.]

Eleventhly. "The glory of miracles, which a man would be wary of contradicting, for fear of blasphemy and sinning against the Holy Ghost:" especially when they are such miracles as no body ever saw, but the monk who relates them; or miracles to prove both parts of a contradiction to be true; as for instance,

that the Virgin Mary *was*, and was *not* conceived in original sin. But if ever they suffered poor Jetzer's fate, they would rather hereafter believe, than feel such miracles.—“Still continued, and denied by none but sceptics, in dispossession of devils.” I suppose he means the boy of Bilson, and curing the *struma*, the king's evil; but this is a protestant as well as a popish miracle, and is a better proof that the king, than that the pope, is the head of the church.

Twelfthly. “The gift of prophecy.” Witness the maid of Kent.—“To say nothing concerning the confession of adversaries, and unhappy exit of the church's enemies.” Which may very well be spared, for there have been confessions, and unhappy exits on both sides; though Henry VIII. and queen Elizabeth, and king James I. were no examples of such unhappy exits.—“These, these are the notes, which, like a bill in parliament, deserve a second reading:” and then to be thrown out, though I hope they will never come in there.

The way being thus prepared, the court seated, and the jury of Notes empanelled, (which I suppose is the reason why he calls but twelve of Bellarmine's fifteen, the rest being supernumeraries,) the *Discourser* is summoned to make his appearance. [*Enter Discourser.*] Which, I can assure you, put him into a fright on the sudden, fearing it might be the inquisition; but he recollected himself, and thus began his plea.

“Is not the catholic church visible? And if we can see which is the church, what need we guess at it by marks and signs? (and that by such marks and signs too, as are matter of dispute themselves.) Cannot we distinguish between the Christian church, and a Turkish mosque, and a Jewish synagogue? Cannot we without all this trouble distinguish a Christian from a Turk, or a Jew, or a Pagan? And it will be as easy to find out a Christian church, as it will be to find out Christians.” And what now is the evil in this? “Oh!” says the *Justifier*, “what spirit that is which envies the Christian the felicity of finding the true church, and casts an evil eye upon the notes conducing to it, let any Christian judge!” A very evil spirit, doubtless! but does the *Discourser*, who says that the church is visible, and may be known without disputable

notes, do this? For notes are only to discover things absent and invisible, as what is visible is best known by itself. "Yes, for whereas he pretends it is visible (besides that he flatly denies it after); nay," say I, "not among counterfeits: is it visible at sea, which is the royal navy, when the enemy puts up the English colours?"

First, then, let us reconcile the *Discourser* with himself. He asks, whether the church be not visible? and therein appeals to the confession of his adversaries, that the church is visible; and wonders what need there is of notes, of disputable notes, to find out a visible church. He desires to know, "How they will prove that there is a church without the Scripture?" He answers for them, that "the church is visible, for we see a christian church in the world; but (says he), What is it I see? I see a company of men, who call themselves a church, and this is all that I can see; and is this seeing a church? A church must have a divine original and institution, and therefore there is no seeing a church without seeing its charter;" and is this to deny the visibility of the church, because it cannot be seen or known without its charter, when its charter is as visible as the society which calls itself the church? And surely that church is visible enough, whose society and charter are both visible, though the church cannot be known without its charter.

But now the *Answerer* will not allow the church to be visible "among counterfeits." In this case it has not been visible these hundred years at least; and then what becomes of Bellarmine's notes, which are none, if the church be not visible; for they are notes not of an invisible, but of a visible church. But the comparison whereby he proves this, is an eternal confutation of such extra-essential notes: "Is it visible at sea which is the royal navy, when the enemy puts up the English colours?"—which shews how fallible notes are; for colours are notes of the royal navy, and these may deceive us; but if you go abroad, and see the ships and the company, and their commissions, you cannot be mistaken. The natures of things cannot be counterfeited, but notes may.

The *Discourser* says, "A christian church is nothing else but a

society of Christians united under christian pastors, for the worship of Christ." This the *Justifier* thinks a very slight way of speaking—nothing else but! (and if he does not understand English, I cannot help that) but "*christian pastors* for a need will take in presbyters, who renounce episcopacy, nay congregational, who renounce presbytery." It takes in indeed *all christian pastors*, be they what they will. Whether Presbyterian and Independent ministers are christian pastors, the *Discourser* was not concerned to determine; for he did not undertake to tell in particular, which are the true christian churches, but what is the general notion of a christian church; not who are true pastors, but that the union of Christians under true christian pastors makes a church: though the *pastores ecclesiæ*, in the ancient language, signified only bishops, who had the care of the flock, and the government of the inferior presbyters. "Thus," continues the *Justifier*, "the worship of Christ, may signify with Liturgy, or without it, with the Apostle's Creed, or without it," &c. And so it may, if both *with* and *without* be the true worship of Christ. What a long definition must the *Discourser* have given of a christian church, had he been directed by this author, and stated all the controversies about episcopacy and presbytery, and the several kinds and modes of worship, in his definition! which, when he had done it, had been nothing at all to his purpose.

The *Discourser* proceeds: "All such particular or national churches all the world over, make up the whole christian church, or universal church of Christ." "Yes," says the *Justifier*, "and all such churches of Christ (if they could meet) would be like the men in the market-place, one crying out one thing, and another another, and no authority could send them home peaceably to their dwellings." I confess I am of another mind, that, could all the churches in the world meet, how much soever they differ at a distance, they would agree better before they parted; and this, I think, all those should believe, who have any reverence for general councils, which certainly such a meeting as this would be, in a proper sense.

Well! but "schism lies in the word, *national church*." How so, good sir?—"As if nations here were at their own disposal." And

pray, why may not all the churches in a nation unite into one national communion? And how is this a schism, if they maintain brotherly communion with other christian churches?—"Or as if Christ begged leave of the potentates of the earth to plant his truth among them." Why so? Cannot there be a national church without "Christ's begging leave of potentates to plant his gospel among them?" Suppose there be churches planted in a nation without the leave of the potentates, may not all these churches unite into a national communion without the leave of potentates too? and is not such a national union of churches a national church? Suppose princes voluntarily submit their sceptres to Christ, and encourage and protect the christian churches in their dominions, and unite them all into one national church; is there any need of Christ's asking leave of such potentates, who willingly devote themselves to his service?—But he says, "The greater mistake is, that these churches all put together make up the universal church of Christ." But are not all the churches the universal church? What then is the universal church but all? "Yes," he says, "universal enough, I confess, but where is the unity?" Why, is it *impossible* that all churches should be united in one communion? If it be, then unity is not necessary, or the universal church does not include all churches; if it be not, then all churches may be the universal, the one catholic church of Christ.—"We," says he, "look for unity; they show us multitude and division." Is multitude and division the same thing? Or is unity inconsistent with multitude? How then could the churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome, be one church? "We desire unity, they show us universality:" as if there could not be unity in universality! I wish this author would first learn grammar and logic, or, which I fear is harder to teach him, common sense, before he pretends again to dispute in divinity; but now as we have him, we must make the best of him we can.

And here the *Answerer* spends several pages in proving that the church must be one, which nobody that I know of denies, and which he may find truly stated in the answer to Cardinal Bellarmine's seventh Note. But what is this to the *Discourser*, who was not

concerned to state this point? He gives such a definition of a church, as belongs to all true particular churches, as every man ought to do, who gives the definition of a church; for a particular church has the entire nature and essence of a church; and there can be no true definition of a church, but what belongs to a particular church. He says indeed, that the universal church consists of all true particular churches; and so most certainly it does. "No," says the *Answerer*, "all particular churches are not at unity, and therefore they cannot be the one catholic or universal church." But suppose this, is there any other notion of the universal church, but that it is made up of all true particular churches?—which is all that the *Discourser* asserted, without considering how all particular churches must be united to make the one catholic church, which was nothing to his purpose. In such a divided state of Christendom as this, mere external unity and communion cannot be the mark of a true church, because all churches are divided from each other. If we are not at unity with the church of Rome, no more is the church of Rome at unity with us; and if mere unity be the mark of the true church, neither part of the division can pretend to it. And therefore either some churches may be true churches, which are not at unity with all others, or there is no true church in the world. And therefore, though Cardinal Bellarmine makes unity the mark of a true church, yet not the unity of all churches with each other (for he knew there was no such thing, in his days, in the world, and I fear is not likely to be again in haste); but the unity of churches to the Bishop of Rome, who is the visible head of the church. And thus the catholic church signifies all those churches which are united to the bishop of Rome, as the centre of unity. But this is such an unity as the Scripture says nothing of, and which Protestants disown, and which this *Answerer* has not said one word to prove; for this is the unity of subjection, not the unity of love and charity, which Christ and his apostles so vehemently press us to. Now, if the unity of the catholic church does not consist in subjection to a visible head, and all other external communion is broken and divided, we must content ourselves to know what it is that makes a particular national church, a true, sound, and pure

church ; for whatever divisions there be in the world, every true church is part of Christ's one catholic church. And whatever unity there be among other churches, if they be not true churches, they are no parts of Christ's catholic church. And this was all the *Discourser* intended, or was obliged to show, in pursuit of his design.

And thus I might pass over what he talks about church unity, but that he has some very peculiar marks which are worth our notice.

He says, " Protestants salve the unity of the church, mainly because Christendom is divided and separated from heathenism" (which I wish heartily all Christendom perfectly were), " not considering so much the unity with itself." But pray who told him that Protestants do *not* place the unity of the church in *unity*, but in *separation*? All true christian churches are united in the most essential things : they have one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and this makes them one body, animated by the same Holy Spirit which dwells in the whole christian church, (Ephes. iv. 4—6.) But still they are not one entire communion, but divided and separate from each other. This, we will grant, is a very great fault ; but yet if they communicate in such things as make one church, whatever their other divisions are, they are one church still ; their quarrels and divisions may hurt themselves, but cannot destroy the unity of the church : for the church is one body, not merely by the unity and agreement of Christians among themselves, but by the appointment and institution of Christ, who has made all those that profess the true faith, and are united in the same sacraments, to belong to the same body, to be his one body. And therefore Christians are never exhorted to be one body, for this they are if they be Christians, as the apostle expressly asserts that Christians are but one body ; but they are exhorted to live in unity and concord, because they are but one body : " I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering ; forbearing one another in love ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of

peace. There is one body and one Spirit.”*—Because there is but one body and one Spirit, therefore they must “endeavour to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:” which supposes the christian church to be one body by institution, though the external peace of the church be broken by schisms and factions; because our obligation to preserve the peace of the church and the unity of ecclesiastical communion, results from this unity of body; which makes schism a very great evil, and very destructive to men’s souls, as all other vices are; but the church, which has but one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, is but one church still, though Christians quarrel with each other. Thus St. Paul asserts, “That as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body; so also is Christ.”† But how do all Christians come to be one body in Christ? That he thus answers, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been made to drink into one Spirit.” And from hence he shows what tenderness all Christians ought to express for each other, as being members of each other; verse 25,—“That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another.” But suppose Christians have not this mutual care one of another, do they cease to be members of the same body? No such thing; these quarrels between the members of the same body are very unnatural, but the members are the same body still. Vers. 15, 16,—“If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?” that is, Though the members of the same body, out of discontent, and envy, and emulation, should separate from each other, and deny that they belong to the same body, yet they are of the body still. For we must consider, that the schisms in the church of Corinth were occasioned by an emulation of spiritual gifts; and unless every one of them could be an eye or a hand, that is, have the most eminent gifts, they envied and divided amongst each other, as if they did not belong to the same body; which, the apostle tells them, was as absurd as if the

* Ephes. iv. 1—3.

† 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, &c.

eye, and the hand, and the foot, should deny their relation to the same natural body, because they differed in their use and honour. However, if such a thing were possible in the natural body, they would all belong to the same body still; and so it is in the christian church. All which shows, that the whole christian church is the one mystical body of Christ, united to him by faith and baptism, notwithstanding all the divisions of Christendom.

For let us consider what the divisions of Christendom are, and whether they be such as wholly destroy the unity of the body. All the churches in the world are divided from the church of Rome, by disowning the authority of the Pope as the visible head of the catholic church; but this does not destroy the unity of the body, because the unity of the body does not consist in the union of all churches to one visible head, but in their union to Christ, who is the one Lord of the church. Some churches are divided in faith; not but that they agree in the necessary articles of the christian faith (for to renounce any essential article of the christian faith does so far *unchurch*); but some churches believe only what Christ and his apostles taught; others, together with the true faith of Christ, teach heretical doctrines, contrary to that form of sound words once delivered to the saints. And though this must of necessity divide communions (for if any church corrupt the christian faith with new and perverse doctrines of her own, other orthodox Christians are not bound to believe as they do), yet both of them are true christian churches still; for the true faith makes a true church, but only with this difference, that those who profess the true faith of Christ without any corrupt mixtures, are sound and orthodox churches: other churches are more or less pure, according to the various corruptions of their faith. And thus it is with respect to the christian sacraments, and christian worship; every church which observes the institutions of our Saviour, and worships God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, is a true church; but those churches which corrupt this worship, though they are true, are corrupt churches; as the church of Rome does in the worship of saints and angels, and of the Virgin Mary, and of the adoration of the host, and of the sacrifice of the mass, &c. And in this case, though what they retain of the essentials of christian worship is sufficient to denominate them

true churches, yet other churches are not bound to communicate with them in their corruptions.

The plain state then of the case is this. All churches which profess the true faith and worship of Christ, though intermixed with great corruptions, belong to the one body, Christ ; and to know whether any church be a true church, we must not so much inquire which they communicate with, or separate from ; but what their faith and worship is. That external unity is so far from being the mark of a true church, that we may be bound not to communicate with true churches which are corrupt ; because we are not bound to communicate in a corrupt faith or worship : and that in this case the guilt of separation lies on that side where the corruptions are. And yet all the christian churches in the world, that retain the true faith and worship of Christ, though they are divided from each other upon the disputes of faith, or worship, or discipline, are yet the one church of Christ, as being united in the essentials of faith and worship, which by the institution of Christ makes them his one mystical body, and one church.

Some lines after, he has a very notable remark about the unity of the church. That “ the church admits not, but casts out some, though they profess Christianity, schismatics, heretics ; which being cast out, if you mark it well, she is united with herself.” And I assure you it is worth marking ; for if you mark it well, every conventicle in Christendom is thus united with itself. But is this the unity of the *catholic* church, to cast all out of our communion, who are not of our mind ; and then call ourselves the catholic church, when there are a great many other churches which profess the faith of Christ as truly and sincerely as we do, and are as much united among themselves as we are ? Why may not the church of England, upon this principle, call herself the catholic church ? for she has more unity in this way than the church of Rome has. When all heretics and schismatics are cast out, she is united with herself ; and if this unity be a mark of the catholic church, all the churches and conventicles of Christendom are the catholic church, for they are all united with themselves. But then the difficulty will be, how all these churches, which are united with themselves, but separated from one another, make one catholic church ? Or, which of these churches, which

are thus united with themselves (which it seems is catholic unity!) is the one church? For every one of them hath this mark of the catholic church, that they are united with themselves.

He proves "That schismatics are not of the church, one holy entire church, from their very name, which signifies *rending and tearing*, not the seamless coat alone, but the blessed body of our Lord!" And I must confess, the name schismatic is as good a mark of a schismatical church, as the name catholic is of the catholic church: but we must consider, who are the godfathers, and whether they have given proper names or not. Now the church of Rome is the common godmother, which christens herself catholic, and all other churches schismatics; but whether she be infallible in giving names, ought to be considered.

But schism signifies *rending and dividing*; and yet a schismatical church signifies a church too: and how it is a church without belonging to *the one church*, when there is but *one church*, is somewhat mysterious. And therefore schism is not tearing of a part of the church, but *one part dividing from the other in external communion*, which supposes that both parts still belong to the same church, or else the church is not divided. For apostasy and schism are two different things; apostates *cease* to be of the church, schismatics *are* of the church still, though they disturb the peace of the church, and divide the external communion of it: thus they differ, the one forsaking the church, and going out of it (which no man does, who does not renounce the faith of Christ), and the other raising quarrels and contentions in it, to the alienating of Christians from each other.

But that schismatics are not of the church, he proves from St. Paul's *rebuking his schismatic* Corinthians with this quick interrogatory: "*Is Christ*," saith he (he means his catholic church) "*divided*?" "How? nothing more absurd than to grant division in the church!" An excellent paragraph! Does St. Paul, who reproves these Corinthians for their schisms, shut them out too of the church on account of them? Does he deny them to belong to the church, when he directs his epistle to *the church of God at Corinth*? Is it so very absurd, to grant that there are divisions in the church, when St. Paul rebukes them for their divisions; which surely supposes that they were divided? And is it absurd to

suppose that to be, which at the same time we confess to be? To say that *Christ* is *divided*, or that there are more Christs than one, would be very absurd indeed; to say that the church of Christ is divided, is no absurdity, because it is true; but the absurdity or unreasonableness, and indecency, which St. Paul charges them with, is the absurdity in practice, that, when there is but one Christ, one Lord, whom they all worship, the disciples of the same Lord should divide from each other, as if they served and worshipped different masters.

But he has a very choice note about the unity of the church, "That it is the unity of a body, a living animate body;" but not I hope of a natural, but a mystical body, animated by that Divine Spirit which dwells in the whole, and in every part of it; and therefore nothing can cut us off from the unity of this body, but that which divides us totally from the quickening and animating influences of the Spirit, which it is certain all external divisions do not. Well! "but it is not the unity of a mathematical body, which is *divisibile in semper divisibilia* (into ever divisible parts), but animate." This I believe every body will grant him, that the church is not a mathematical body; but what harm is there in mathematical unity? Oh! that is divisible without end; and that I confess is an ill kind of unity: but I hope it is one, till it be divided, and I fear a *living animate body* is divisible too; and if that cannot be one which is divisible, I fear there is no such thing as unity in nature, excepting in God; and then it is not sufficient to prove the catholic church to be one because it is united, unless he can prove that it is *not divisible*. But indeed he is a little out in applying his axiom: forasmuch as he despises this mathematical unity, he can find this indivisible unity only in a mathematical point; and possibly this may be the reason why the church of Rome makes the pope the centre of catholic unity, which is as near a mathematical point as it well can be.

In the same place he very gravely asks, "If the church of God be distinguished even from the heretic and the schismatic, which of the churches is like to be most catholic—that which maintains its unity against heresy and schism, or that which is most favourable to the separation?" No doubt, Sir, that which opposes heresy and schism is the most catholic church; but I thought the

question had been, not about the *most*, but the *one catholic* church. For one church may be more catholic than another, by more strictly adhering to the catholic faith and worship, and yet both of them belong to the same catholic church. Well, but what then? Truly I cannot guess; he says, "The dissenter scarce owns any such distinctions, or very rarely." What! do they never talk of heresy and schism? nor own that there are any heresies and schisms? But "they pronounce no anathemas, except one perhaps:" against the church of Rome, I suppose, he means. But anathemas are proper only for general councils; and this is a new note of the catholic church, which Bellarmine did not think of—viz. pronouncing anathemas, in which the church of Rome has outdone all the churches in the world, and therefore is the most catholic church! "But they would have dissenters looked upon as members of the aggregate church, notwithstanding their dissensions, as well as others." Who are these "they?" The church of England: then they are kinder to dissenters than the church of Rome, notwithstanding all the good words she has lately given them. But what then? What then, do you say? There is a terrible *then*. Why, that this kindness of the persecuting church of England to the dissenters proves her to be a harlot. For "it is the famous case brought before king Solomon: catholics, like the honest woman, would have the whole child; the harlot would have the child divided." Was ever such stuff put together? Catholics are for shutting all out of the church, and being the whole church themselves, therefore they are "for the *whole* child," when they have cut off three parts of it, and divided it into a whole, "united with itself." Others are so charitable, as far as it is possible, to make a whole church, the one catholic church, of all the divided communions of Christendom; and they, like the harlot, would have the child divided! What a blessing is ignorance and stupidity! The first, to find out such arguments, as all the wit and learning in the world could never have discovered; and the second to make men believe them, and publish them without blushing. But here is enough, in all conscience, of this; let us now try if we can pick out any thing that may deserve an answer. And that the reader may the better judge between us, I shall take a review of the brief discourse concerning the Notes of the Church,

in the method wherein it lies, and consider, what this *Answerer* and *Justifier* of Bellarmine's Notes has to say against it.

I observed then, that the true state of this controversy about the Notes of the Church, as it is managed by Cardinal Bellarmine, is not, what it is which makes a church a true church; but "how among all the divisions of Christendom, we may find out that only true church, which is the mistress of all other churches, the only infallible guide in matters of faith, and to which alone the promises of pardon and salvation are made." Now the *Answerer* grants, that this is the controversy between us, and says, "the Roman catholics put the question right." And no doubt they have christian liberty to put what questions they please; all that I there observed was, that Protestants, in the notes they gave of a church, answer to that question, *what* a true church is? that Papists give notes, whereby to know *which* is the true church, and which is the most reasonable way? shall be examined presently.

I began with the protestant way, "To find out a church by the essential properties of the church, such as the profession of the true christian faith, and the christian sacraments rightly and duly administered by persons rightly ordained, according to the institution of our Saviour, and the apostolical practice." Here he complains that we give but two poor notes of a christian church. But if *two* be all, they are a great deal better than such *fifteen* notes, as are none. And here I considered what Cardinal Bellarmine objects against these notes.

1. "That notes whereby we will distinguish certain things, must not be common to other things, but proper and peculiar to that of which it is a note. . . . Now I must confess these notes, (as he observes,) are common to all christian churches, and were intended to be so. . . . The protestant churches do not desire to confine the notes of the church to their own private communion, but are very glad, if all the churches in the world be as true churches as themselves." "And this," says the *Answerer*, "let me tell him, will be easily granted, *tam quam*, one every whit as good as another." And this I wish he could make good, for the sake of his own church. But will he call this answering? He cites a place out of Tertullian, which he durst not translate, for fear every English reader should see that it was to no purpose;

that heretics, though they differed from each other, yet did all conspire to oppose the truth; which is an admirable argument against all churches conspiring in the same faith. "But this," he says, "supposes all churches to be alike pure, equally catholic, equally apostolic." Just as much as to say, that a man is a reasonable creature, supposes all men to be equally wise, and equally honest. The true faith, and true sacraments, I hope, may be essential to all true churches, as reason is to human nature; and yet all true churches may not retain the christian faith and sacraments in equal purity, no more than every man, who has reason, reasons equally well and truly. And therefore the church of England can distinguish herself still both from *papists* and *fanatics*, notwithstanding these notes.

His next argument, "Why these cannot be the notes of the church is, because the true faith and true sacraments are essential to the church, and therefore can be no notes of discovery," according to his former wise observation, that a note must be extra-essential, which has been examined already. "For," says he, "the question is, *which* is the true church?" But Protestants think the first question ought to be, "*what* a true church is;" and then we can know, without any other notes, *which* is a true church; as when we know what a man is, we can easily find out a man. But how shall I know half this essence, true faith, &c.? We must either say, by consent with Scripture, or consent with the primitive church, and then we shall stumble upon the Cardinal's notes, or somewhat like it. *They*, I confess, will be in danger of a very fatal stumble, if they stumble either upon Scripture or antiquity; but *we* dare venture both. Let them but grant, that the true faith is the note of a true church, and we will refer the trial of our faith to Scripture and antiquity when they please: though Cardinal Bellarmine had so much wit as not to refer the trial of the church's faith to Scripture.

I added, "That when we give notes which belong to a whole species, as we must do when we give the notes of *a* true christian church, we must give such notes as belong to the whole kind, that is, to *all* true christian churches. And though these notes are *common* indeed to *all* true christian churches, yet they are proper

and *peculiar* to a true christian church ; as the essential properties of a man are common to all men, but proper to mankind : and this is necessary to make them true notes ; for such notes of a church as do not fit all true churches, cannot be true notes." But this, which is the true answer to Bellarmine's argument, he wisely drops.

As for what the Cardinal urges, that all sorts of Christians think themselves to have the true faith and true sacraments ; I answered, " I am apt to think they do ; but what then ? If they have not the true faith and true sacraments, they are not true churches, whatever they think of it ; and yet the true faith and true sacraments are certain notes of the true church. A purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate ; but yet a purchase upon a title, which is not only thought to be, but is a good one, is a good estate."

To this he answers ; " This is the same error again ; for a good title, I hope, is essential ; it is no note of a good estate." Oh the wit of some disputers ! What other note is there of a good estate but a good title ? But he says there are "*other* notes which lead to the discovery of a good title ;" what then ? they are the notes of the title, not of the estate ; they prove a good title, and a good title makes a good estate. And yet, that the land be not pre-engaged, be free from all incumbrances, that there be no flaw in the demise, I take to be essential to a good title, and therefore, according to our author's logic, cannot be notes either.

But what is all this to the purpose ? Bellarmine proves that the true faith cannot be the note of a true church, because all sects of Christians pretend to it. I answer, that though those who pretend to the true faith, and have it not, are not true churches, yet those who have the true faith are true churches : as a purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate, but yet a purchase upon a good title is a good estate. To this the *Justifier* of Bellarmine answers, that " a good title is essential, and therefore is no note of a good estate." Whereas the dispute here is not about essential or extra-essential notes, but whether the true faith cannot be a note of the true church, because some men pretend to the true faith who have it not. But want of

understanding is necessary to make some men answerers of books, which men of understanding know they cannot answer.

The Cardinal's second objection against the protestant notes of a church is, "That the notes of any thing must be more known than the thing itself:" this I granted. "Now," says he, "which is the true church, is more knowable than which is the true faith:" and this I denied, for this plain reason, "Because the true church cannot be known without knowing the true faith: for no church is a true church which does not profess the true faith." Now, says our *Answerer*, "this being denied, we prove it thus," &c. But methinks he should first have answered the argument, before he had gone to proving; but that, it seems, is not his talent. Well, but how does he prove that the true church may be known before we know the true faith? Admirably, I assure you. "If the church be the pillar of truth raised up aloft that it may be conspicuous to all men, it must be more manifest than the truth." This pillar raised aloft is a new notion, which I suppose he learned from the monument at London-bridge, which indeed is very visible; but other wiser writers, by the pillar and ground of truth, prove, that the church is the foundation whereon truth is built; but that would not serve his purpose, to make the church more visible than the truth, for he knows that the foundation is not so visible as that which is built on it. And in the next page he honestly confesses that the true faith is the foundation of the church, and therefore proves that the true church cannot be known by the true faith; for "that is as if I should say, I cannot know the house unless I see the foundation—the next way to overturn it." So dangerous things are metaphors, which prove backward and forward, as a man fancies. But let the church be a pillar raised aloft, or a foundation-pillar, or what pillar he pleases, must not we know the church before we know it to be a pillar of truth? Or, can we know which church is the pillar of truth before we know what truth is?

Well! But let us now look to ourselves, for he undertakes to *demonstrate* it. "The fruits of the Spirit, the graces, are more known than the Spirit itself." *Ergo*, the true church must be known before the true faith. "The outward profession of faith

more than the inward profession." *Ergo*, The true church must be known before the outward profession of the true faith, which makes a true church. "The concrete more than the abstract, the believer than the belief." I can know the men before I know their faith. *Ergo*, The true church must be known before the true faith. He is a very hard-hearted man who will not allow this to be demonstration; but he is a very good-natured man who will allow it to be sense.

Well! but he has a *distinction* that will do the business. "*Aliud notius nobis, et aliud natura;*" *i. e.* Some things are more knowable in themselves, and some things are more knowable to us: but we are inquiring which is most knowable to us, the true faith or the true church.

He grants then, "That true faith being a constituent of, or essential to the church, may be said to be *natura notior*, first known in the order of nature. But we would not have these methods confounded: for if faith be essential, it is the less known to us for that very reason; because the first constituents of a compound are last known, except to the maker. It is more manifest to us that we are flesh and blood, though God knows that we are dust and ashes." How happy is the age that has produced so great a schoolman as this, to whom the great Aquinas himself is but a mere novice! The church is a compound body, in which faith is mixed and blended, as the four elements are in natural bodies; and therefore as we can more easily know what a stone or a tree is, than see the four elements in it, fire and air, and water and earth, of which it is compounded, and which are so mixed together as to become invisible in their own natures; so the church is more knowable than the true faith, which is so compounded with the church as to become invisible itself; nay, to be as much changed and transformed in the composition, as dust and ashes is into flesh and blood: and thus I confess he has hit upon the true reason why the true church must be known before the true faith; because the church of Rome (which is his true church) has so changed and transformed the faith, that unless the faith can be known by the church, the church can never be known by the faith. How much is one grain of common sense better than all

these philosophical subtleties ? For indeed the church is not a compound body, but a society of men professing the faith of Christ, and the only difference between them and other societies is the christian faith ; and therefore the christian faith is the only thing whereby the church is to be known, and to be distinguished from other bodies of men ; and therefore the church cannot be known without the faith ; unless I can know any thing without knowing that by which alone it is what it is. And when there are several churches in the world, and a dispute arises, which is the true church, there is no other possible way of deciding it without knowing the true faith ; for it is the true faith which makes a true church, not as dust and ashes make flesh and blood, but as a true faith makes true believers, and true believers a true church : and though that society of men which is the church is visible, yet the true church is no more visible than the true faith ; for to see a church is to see a society of men who profess the true faith, and how to see that without seeing the true faith is past my understanding.

In the next place the Cardinal urges, “ That we cannot know what true Scripture is, nor what is the true interpretation of Scripture, but from the church ; and therefore we must know the church before we can know the true faith.” To this I answered, “ As for the first, I readily grant, that at this distance from the writing of the books of the New Testament, there is no way to assure us that they were written by the apostles, or apostolical men, and owned for inspired writings, but the testimony of the church in all ages.” And our *Answerer* says I begin now to answer honestly ; and I am very glad I can please him. But it seems, I had pleased him better, if I would have called it an *infallible tradition* ; but that *infallible* is a word we Protestants are not much used to when applied to tradition ; it satisfies us, if it be a very *credible* tradition, the truth of which we have no reason to suspect. But I have lost our *Answerer's* favour for ever, by adding, “ But herein we do not consider them as a church, but as *credible witnesses*.” This makes him sigh to think “ how loth men are to own the church. For this company of men so attesting, were Christians, not vagrants, or idle praters of strange news in ridiculous stories,” (I hope not, for then they could not be

credible witnesses;) “but were agreed in the attestation of such a divine volume, not only as a book” (which would do very little service indeed) “but as a rule, as an oracle.” All this I granted; but still the question is, Whether that testimony they give to the Scriptures relies upon their authority, considered as a church, or considered only as credible witnesses. And when this author shall think fit to answer what I there urge to prove, that they must not be considered as a church, but as credible witnesses, I shall think of a reply, or shall yield the cause. But this *Answerer* is a most unmerciful man at comparisons: “For,” says he, “to tell us we cannot know the church, but by the Scripture, is to tell us that we cannot know a piece of gold without a pair of scales.” The *weight* of gold, I suppose he means, and then it is pretty right; and if we must weigh gold after our father, I suppose we may weigh it after the church too, though she be our mother. “Or that a child cannot know his father till he comes to read philosophy, and understand the secrets of generation.” And it is well if he can know him then: this, I confess, is exceeding apposite; for a child must be a traditionary believer, and take his mother’s word (as Papists believe the mother church) who is his father.

“That we could not understand the true interpretation of Scripture either, without the church.” This I denied, and gave my reasons for it, which our *Answerer*, according to his method of answering books, takes no notice of, but gives *his* reasons on the other side. I affirmed, that the Scriptures are very intelligible in all things necessary to salvation, to honest and diligent readers. Instead of this he says, I affirm, “That every honest and diligent reader knows the sense” (of Scripture it must be) “in all things necessary to salvation;” which differ as much as being intelligible and being actually understood; though I will excuse him so far, that I verily believe he had no dishonest intention in changing my words, but did not understand the difference between them. “But,” says he, “did not St. Peter write to honest and diligent readers, when he warns them of wresting some places in St. Paul to their own destruction, as *others* also *did*?” As *they did other Scriptures* also, St. Peter says; but he says too, that they were “the unlearned and the unstable” who did thus. And though the

Scriptures be intelligible, such men need a guide, not to dictate to them, but to expound Scripture, and help them to understand it; but does St. Peter therefore warn them against reading the Scriptures, or direct them to receive the sense of Scripture only from the church? or say that honest and diligent readers cannot understand them without the authority of the church? But it seems there are several articles very necessary to salvation which men cannot agree about, no, not all Protestants; as “the divinity of the Son of God, the necessity of good works, the distinction of sins mortal and less mortal” (which is a new distinction, unless by less mortal he means venial, that is not mortal at all), “the necessity of keeping the Lord’s-day, and using the Lord’s Prayer.” Now these points are either intelligibly taught in the Scripture, or they are not; if not, how does he know they are in the Scripture? If they be, why cannot an honest and diligent reader understand that which is intelligible? That all men do not agree about the sense of Scripture in all points, is no better argument to prove that the Scriptures are not intelligible, than that reason itself is not intelligible; for all men do not agree about that either.

Well, but he will allow, “That honest readers may arrive to the understanding of that part of Scripture which the light of nature suggests: that we must not steal, defraud; we must do as we will be done by. But he little thinks what he hath done in granting this; for then, if his church should expound Scripture against the light of nature, honest readers may understand the Scripture otherwise; and if his church should be found tripping in such matters, honest readers might be apt to question her infallibility in other cases; for those who once mistake, can never be infallible: and yet this light of nature teaches a great many shrewd things; and the Scripture teaches them too; and therefore, in these matters, honest and diligent readers may understand the Scriptures, though it be against the exposition of his church; as, that divine worship must be given to none but God: that God, who is an invisible Spirit, must not be worshipped by material and visible images: that public prayers ought to be in a language which is understood by the people: that marriage is honourable among all men: that faith is to be kept with all men: that every soul must be subject to the higher powers: that none can judi-

cially forgive sins, but only God: that to forgive sin, is not to punish it, and therefore God does not punish for those sins which he has wholly pardoned: and other such like things are taught by the light of nature, as well as Scripture; and we thank him heartily, that he will give us leave to understand these things. But he proceeds, "It is the revelation part, the mysterious part, which is properly called the holy Scripture, which is not so perspicuous." What, are not the *words* perspicuous and intelligible? To what purpose then were they writ? Or, is it the *thing* which is above our comprehension? But that does not hinder but we may understand what the Scripture teaches, though we do not fully comprehend it. For I would know, whether honest readers fully comprehend the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation, the natures and person of Christ, which were the subject of the Arian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies, when the church teaches these things; I suppose they will not say they do; and yet they will own that they can understand what the church teaches about them: and then, though they cannot comprehend these mysteries, yet they may as well understand what the Scripture, as what the church teaches about them. "Now," says our author, "to say the Scripture is plain to every honest private reader in these arcana, is to deny and cassate all church history; make œcumenical councils ridiculous, run down all synods and convocations that ever were or shall be." Why so, I pray? Does church history, or œcumenical councils, all convocations and synods declare, that the Scriptures are not intelligible in these matters? or that a private, honest, diligent reader cannot understand them? How came they then to determine them for articles of faith? by their own authority, or by the authority of Scripture? Should synods and convocations, and œcumenical councils, determine that for an article of faith, which is not plain and intelligible in Scripture, they were ridiculous indeed, and there were an end of their authority.

And here he appeals to the testimonies produced by the Cardinal, out of Irenæus, Tertullian, and St. Augustine, which have been so often answered already, that I do not think it worth the while to engage with this *Answerer* about them; let the reader, if he please, consult some late books to this purpose; as that

learned vindication of the answer to the royal papers about church authority ; and the Pillar and Ground of Truth. But I cannot pass on without taking notice of his unanswerable argument, to prove “ That the church of Rome understands St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, and, by consequence, the Articles of Justification, whether by faith alone or works, better than all the lay-readers of the Reformation, viz. because he can never be persuaded that any private man should understand an epistle of St. Paul better than the church to which it was written. How unworthy is it to opine the contrary !” And how silly is it to think that those must necessarily understand an epistle best to whom it was written ! But if those Christians at Rome, to whom St. Paul wrote (for he takes no notice of any formed and settled church there, at the writing of his epistle, and therefore does not direct it to the church, as he does in other epistles, but to the saints that are at Rome),—I say, if those Christians might be supposed at that time (when the state of the controversy among them was generally known) to understand this epistle better than we can now, yet what is this to the church of Rome at sixteen hundred years’ distance ? However, by this rule we may understand all St. Paul’s other epistles as well as the church of Rome, and that will serve our purpose. And yet, methinks, if the churches to which the epistles were sent are the only authentic expositors of such epistles, all those churches to whom St. Paul wrote, should have been preserved to this day, to have expounded those epistles to us ; and yet not one of them is now in being, excepting the church of Rome ; and, therefore, at least we must make what shift we can to expound them ourselves, for the church of Rome can pretend no greater right in them than the church of England.

And thus I came, in the second place, to consider the Cardinal’s use of notes, and found several faults with them : “ 1. That he gives notes to find out which is the true church, before we know what a true church is ; whereas there are two inquiries in order of nature before this, viz. Whether there be a true church or not ? and, What it is ? And though the Cardinal takes it for granted that there is a church, I demanded a proof of it ; that they would give me some notes whereby to prove that there is a true

church." This demand amazes our *Answerer*, and makes him cross himself and fall to his beads, "Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth!" But this question is a devil that will not be conjured down; let him either give me some notes to prove that there is a church; or tell me how I shall know it. Yes, that he will do, "for it is self-evident," he says, "that there is a church, as it is that there is a sun in the firmament, or else the heathens could never see it." But what do the heathens see? A christian church? Do they then believe the holy catholic church? If they do, why then does he call them heathens? And if they see a church, and do not believe it to be a church, then it is such a seeing of a church as does not prove that there is a church; for if it did, then all that see the church would believe it, as all that see the sun believe that there is a sun. Good works indeed may be seen, as he learnedly proves; and a Jewish synagogue may be seen, and Christian oratories and chapels with crosses upon them, and this may prove that those who built them believed in a crucified God, which is all he alleges as proof, that it is self-evident that there is a church; by which I see something also that he does not know,—what it is to see a church; though I told him before, "That to see a company of men, who call themselves a church, is not to see a church. For a church must have a divine original and institution, and therefore there is no seeing a church without seeing its charter; for there can be no other note or mark of the being of a church, but the institution of it."

I observed, "That the use of notes in the church of Rome, is to find out the church before and without the Scriptures; for if they admit of a scripture-proof, they must allow that we can know and understand the Scriptures without the authority or interpretation of the church, which undermines the very foundation of popery." In answer to this he says, "Nothing is more easy and familiar (but that men love to be troublesome to their friends) than that the Scriptures must be known by the church, and the church may be known (besides its own evidence) by the Scriptures."

This I believe he has heard so often said, without considering it, that it is become very easy and familiar to him; but it is the hardest thing in the world to me; and therefore begging leave of

him for being so troublesome, I must desire him to explain to me, how two things can be known by each other, when neither of them can be known first; for if the son must beget the father, and the father beget the son, which of them must be begotten first?

But he has an admirable proof of this way of knowing the church by the Scripture, and the Scripture by the church. For “so St. Peter exhorts the wife to good conversation, that she may thereby win the husband to Christianity, even without the word, without the holy Scripture:” implying that a man may be brought over to Christianity both ways,—by the church, and by the Scripture. Suppose this, what is this to knowing the Scripture by the church, and the church by the Scripture? The pious and modest conversation of the wife may give her husband a good opinion of her religion, and may be the first occasion of his inquiring into it, which may end in his conversion; and so may the holy and exemplary lives of Christians do: but does the husband in this case resolve his faith into the authority of his wife without the Scripture? And then resolve the authority of his wife into the authority of the Scripture? If St. Peter had said this indeed, I should have thought we might as reasonably have given this authority to the church as to a wife.

2dly. I observed, another blunder in this dispute about notes, is, “That they give us notes whereby to find out the true catholic church, before we know what a particular church is; because the catholic church is nothing else but all the true christian churches in the world, united together by one common faith and worship, and such acts of communion as distinct churches are capable of, and obliged to; every particular church which professes the true faith and worship of Christ, is a true christian church, and the catholic church is all the true christian churches in the world.—And therefore there can be no notes of a true church, but what belong to all the true christian churches in the world.” Which shows how absurd it is, when they are giving notes of a true church, to give notes of a true *catholic*, and not of a true *particular* church: when I know what makes a particular church a true church, I can know what the catholic is, which signifies all true particular churches, which are the one mystical body of Christ;

but I can never know what a true catholic church is without knowing what makes a particular church a true church ; for all churches have the same nature, and are homogeneal parts of the same body.

This I perceive our *Answerer* did not understand one word of, and therefore says nothing to the main argument, which is to prove, that those who will give notes of the church, must give such as are proper to all true particular churches ; for there can be no other true notes of a church, but what belong to all true churches, because all true churches have the same nature and essence ; which spoils the Cardinal's design of notes to find out the one catholic church, which all Christians must communicate in, and out of which there is no salvation. And therefore, instead of touching upon the main point, he runs out into a new harangue about unity and catholicism ; what unity and communion makes a catholic church ; whether the catholic church be the aggregate of all churches, or only of sound and orthodox churches, which has been considered already, and is nothing to the purpose here : for the only single question here is, whether I can know the catholic church, before I know what a true particular church is ; and consequently, whether the notes of the church ought not to be such as belong to all true particular churches.

By this rule, I briefly examined Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes : those which belonged to all true churches, which very few of them do, I allow to be true notes, but not peculiar to the church of Rome. As the sixth, *The agreement and consent in doctrine with the ancient and apostolic church* ; and the eighth, *The holiness of its doctrine* ; are the chief, if not the only notes of this nature, and these we will stand or fall by.

And because I said, we will stand or fall by these notes, the *Answerer* endeavours to show, that they do not belong to the church of England ; but whether they belong to the church of Rome, and do not belong to us, was not my business to consider in a general discourse about notes ; but it has been examined since, in the examination of those particular notes, and there the reader may find it. But our *Answerer*, according to his old wont, has picked out as unlucky instances, as the greatest adversary of the church of Rome could have done, viz. the doctrine of justifica-

tion and repentance, which are not so corrupted by the very worst fanatics as they are by the church of Rome; witness their doctrines of confession and penance: I may add, of merits and indulgences, for want of which he quarrels with the reformation. "Other notes," I observed, "were not properly notes of the true church, any otherwise than as they are testimonies to the truth of common Christianity: such as his ninth, the efficacy of doctrine: the tenth, the holiness of the lives of the first authors and fathers of our religion." As for the efficacy of doctrine, he says, "That should bear testimony to the church also, if it be true, that more are converted to the catholic church, than apostatize from it." Let him read the examination of the ninth note for this. But if it be true also, that the Roman Catholics do convert more to the christian faith, than any other sort of Christians (as the Spaniards converted the poor Indians) this follows undeniably, that they believe they are more bound to spread the christian religion than any other. And what if they did believe so, are not others as much bound as they? And what follows from hence? That they are the only true church, because they are more zealous in propagating Christianity? Does this relate to the efficacy of doctrine, or to the zeal of the preacher? But he says, "The Pharisees compassing sea and land to make a proselyte, proved them to be the *best* and most zealous of all the Jewish party," though Christ says they made them ten times more the children of hell than they were before! I think none but our author would have had so little wit, as to have justified the church of Rome by the zeal of the Pharisees; for though, as he says, our Saviour's *woe against the Pharisees*, was not precisely intended against their zeal; yet this proves that the greatest corrupters of the faith, may be the most zealous to propagate their errors; and therefore such a zeal does not prove them to be the best men, nor the truest church.

Thus I said the eleventh note, "the glory of miracles;" and the twelfth, "the spirit of prophecy;" are testimonies to the religion, not primarily to the church.

To which he answers, "Let no man be so besotted as to say, that all miracles of a later date are delusions." Fear not, Sir, no miracles, either late or early, are delusions, but some delusions are called miracles, witness the miracles that poor Jetzer felt. But

the question is, whether true miracles prove that particular church in which they are done, the only true church; or only give testimony to the religion in confirmation of which they are wrought. "The spirit of prophecy also," he says, "belongs to the church, unless we find that all the true churches in the circle pretend to it." All that pretend to a religion revealed by prophecy, pretend to the spirit of prophecy; but all do not pretend in this age to have the gift of prophecy, though they may as justly pretend to it as the church of Rome. See the answer to the twelfth note.

I added, that the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth notes, I doubted not, would prove no notes at all, because they are not always true, and at best uncertain. The thirteenth is "the confession of adversaries, which," he says, "will carry a cause in our temporal courts." And good reason too, because they are supposed to speak nothing but what they know, and what the evidence of truth extorts from them; but how the adversaries of Christianity should come to know so well which is the true church, who believe no church at all, is somewhat mysterious; and yet the Cardinal is miserably put to it to make out this note, as may be seen in the answer. The fifteenth, "Temporal felicity," he says, "will evidence the church, as Job's later state did evidence his being in favour with God." But what did his former state do? Was he not then in favour with God too? But would any man talk at this rate, who remembers that Christ was crucified, and his church persecuted for three hundred years? The fourteenth, "The unhappy exit of the enemies of the church;" he says "Count Teckely may be a witness of it," who sides with infidels against the church, and is accordingly blessed. And what thinks he of the misfortunes of some great princes, who have been as zealous for the church?

His third and fourth notes, I said, were "not notes of a church, but God's promises made to his church." And here he triumphs mightily; "Is there such opposition then between notes and promises?" and finds out some promises which he says are notes of the church. I shall not examine that, because it is nothing to the purpose; for if there be some promises which are not notes of the church, I am safe; for I did not say that no promises could be notes, but that these were not notes, but promises, and gave my

reasons for it, why these particular promises could not be notes. As for the third, "A long duration, that it shall never fail;" I said, this could never be a note till the day of judgment. A fine time, he says, to choose our religion in the mean while; but thanks be to God we have other notes of a church than this, and therefore need not wait till the day of judgment to know the true church. But it is certain the duration of the church till the end of the world is such a mark of the church as cannot be known till the end of the world. The fourth, "amplitude and extent," is not to distinguish one christian church from another, but to distinguish the christian church from other religions: and then I doubt this prophecy has not received its just accomplishment yet; for all the christian churches together bear but a small proportion to the rest of the world. And if this promise be not yet accomplished, it cannot be a note of the church. But the reader may see all this fairly stated in the examination of these notes.

His fifth note, "the succession of bishops in the church of Rome, from the apostles' time till now," I grant is a note of the Roman church; and the succession of bishops in the Greek church is as good a note of the Greek church; and any churches which have been later planted, who have bishops in succession from any of the apostles, or apostolical bishops, by this note are as good churches as they. This he very honestly grants, and thereby confesses that this note will not prove the church of Rome to be the one catholic church, which the Cardinal intended by it. Now because I said this note is common to all true churches, and therefore can do the church of Rome no service, he takes me up "All true churches! then where is your communion with Luther's or Calvin's disciples? They do not so much as pretend to succession." Nor is this the dispute now, whether those churches which have not a succession of bishops are true churches; but if he will allow a succession of bishops to be a note of a true church, all those churches are true churches which have this succession, as the Greek church, and the church of England have; and therefore this note can do no service to the church of Rome, as not being peculiar to it. But as for what he says, that succession of doctrine, without succession of office, is a poor plea; I must needs tell him that I think it is a much better plea than succession of office without succession of doctrine.

For I am sure that is not a safe communion where there is not a succession of apostolical doctrine ; but whether the want of a succession of bishops will in all cases unchurch, will admit of a greater dispute : I am sure a true faith in Christ, with a true gospel conversation, will save men ; and some learned Romanists* defend that old definition of the church, that it is *coetus fidelium*, the company of the faithful, and will not admit bishops or pastors into the definition of a church.

His seventh note, I own, is home to his purpose ; “ That that is the only true church which is united to the bishop of Rome as to its head.” If he could prove this, it must do his business without any other notes. But it is like the confidence of a Jesuit to make that the note of the church which is the chief subject of the dispute. “ Very well,” says our *Answerer* ; “ so Irenæus, so St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, Optatus, St. Austin, are answered ; for none of these can turn the scale.” Nor did any of these fathers ever say that the bishop of Rome is the head of the church. This is the dispute still, and will be the dispute, till the church of Rome quit her absurd claims to it. But he says, we of the church of England should consider that not above an hundred years ago we communicated with the apostolic see. And does that make the church of Rome the head of the church ? But have we grounds enough for such a breach as we have made ? It is ground enough sure to renounce our subjection to the bishop of Rome, if he have no right to claim it. But transubstantiation, and the worship of images, and addresses to saints, he thinks very harmless things. Now the mischief is we do not think them so. But this is not a place to dispute these matters.

His first note concerning the name *Catholic*, I observed, makes every church a catholic church which will call itself so. And here he learnedly disputes about some indelible names, which the providence of God orders to be so for great ends. St. Paul directs his epistle to the Romans, *i.e.* he hopes to the Roman Catholics, but a Roman Catholic was an unknown name in those days, and many ages after. But “ at that time, the world, in the apostle’s phrase, was in communion with her.” Where has the apostle any such phrase ? And yet we are now disputing, not

* Johan. Laun. epist. vol. viii. ep. 13, Nicol. Gatinæo.

about catholic communion, but about the name *Roman-catholic* church. Whereas it does not appear that the Romans had at that time so much as the name of the church, as I observed before; and the very name of the catholic church cannot be proved so ancient as that time: and, her faith being spoken of, which he interprets, "her being admired throughout the whole world," whatever it proves, does not prove that she had then the name of the catholic church. He adds, "It is not without something of God, that she keeps the name still." But how does she keep it? She will call herself catholic when nobody else will allow her to be so; and thus any church may keep this name, which did originally belong to all true orthodox churches: as for heretics, they have challenged the name, and kept it too among themselves, as the church of Rome does, though it belonged no more to them than it does to her. His other indelible names of times and places he may make the best of he can. But let all concerned in Black-friars and Austin-friars, and the house of Chartreux,* which has so miraculously preserved its name, look to it; for he seems to hope that these indelible names are preserved for some good purpose.

I added, "The name catholic does not declare what a church is, but in what communion it is; and is no note of a true church, unless it be first proved, that they are the true churches which are in communion with each other." For if three parts in four of all the churches in the world were very corrupt and degenerate in faith and worship, and were in one communion, this would be the most catholic communion, as catholic signifies the most general and universal; but yet, the fourth part, which is sincere, would be the best and truest church, and the catholic church, as that signifies the communion of all orthodox and pure churches.

This distinction of catholic, our *Answerer* likes well, and says, "it does not hurt them, for that case is yet to come," viz. that the most corrupt communion should be most catholic or universal; but that was not the force of the argument, nor any part of it, though it may be it is too true; but the argument was this, that the bare name of catholic cannot prove a church to be a true

* Places in London; Chartreux, called now the Charter-House.

church, because that does not relate to its nature and essence, but to its communion. Now catholic communion signifies, either the most universal communion, or the communion only of pure and orthodox churches, be their number more or less. If we take it in the first sense, the most catholic communion may be the most corrupt; for it may so happen, that the greater number of churches, which are in communion with each other, may be very corrupt. If we take it in the second sense, we must first know, whether those churches are pure and orthodox, before we can tell, whether they be catholic churches; and therefore, in both senses, the bare name of catholic cannot prove a church to be a true church; for we must first know, whether they be true, as that signifies pure and orthodox churches, before we can know whether they be catholic.

But he says, “It is not probable, that God would spread such a temptation and stumbling-block before his own people; yet if he should, for example’ sake, have suffered Lutheranism or Cranmerism to have spread to such a measure, the palpableness of the schism would have been security perhaps sufficient to keep all prudent persons where they were.” This is nothing to the present argument, (as indeed it would be surprising to find him say any thing to the purpose) but yet, if the most catholic communion, as that signifies the most universal, (though the notes do not refer to catholic *communion*, but to the *name* catholic) were a note of the true church, it is not sufficient to say, that it is probable that God will not suffer a corrupt communion to be the most universal; but he must prove, that God has promised this shall not be: and, if according to this supposition, Lutheranism or Cranmerism had prevailed, in three parts in four over the church, how could the palpableness of the schism secure his prudent man from the infection? For if three parts of the church were divided from the fourth, why should a prudent man charge so much the greater number with the schism? Why should the three parts be the schismatics, and not the fourth?

Thirdly. I observed another mystery of finding the true church by notes, is, “to pick out of all christian churches in the world, one church which we must own for the only catholic church, and reject all other churches as heretical or schismatical,

or uncatholic churches, who refuse obedience and subjection to this one catholic church." For if this be not the intent of it, what do all the notes of the church signify to prove, that the church of Rome is the only true catholic church? And if they do not prove this, the Cardinal has lost his labour.

Now I observed, that there are many things to be proved here, before we are ready for the notes of the church. They must first prove, "that there is but one true church in the world; or, as I had expressed it before, one church, which is the mistress of all other churches, and the only principle and centre of catholic unity." To this he answers, "that there is but one true church, which ought to be proved; (*Credo unam sanctam*, doth, it seems, not prove it;) but if there were as many churches as provinces, if they are true, they are one, as hath been explained. Nor stands it with the very institution of the Creed, to say, I believe many true churches; no more than to say, I believe in many true faiths; (which, I suppose, there is some new institution for also, believing in the true faith) for if they be true (say I), they are one; harp not therefore any more on that jarring string." It is really a miserable case for a church, which is able to speak somewhat better for herself, to be exposed by such advocates as do not understand her own principles. For will any learned Romanist deny, that there are several particular true churches? Or, will any Protestant deny, that all true churches are one catholic church, which we profess in our creed? But the controversy between us and the Cardinal is quite of a different nature, not whether there are any particular true churches, nor whether all the true churches in the world make one catholic church; but whether the church of Rome (which considered in itself is but a particular church) be the only true catholic church, the centre of catholic unity? So that no church is a true church, but only by communion with, and subjection to the church of Rome. Now this he can never prove by the notes of a true church, unless he first prove, that there is but one particular church, the communion with, and subjection to which makes all other churches true churches: for if there be more true churches than one, which owe subjection to no other church, but only a friendly and brotherly correspondence, then though his notes of a church

could prove the church of Rome to be a true church, yet could they not prove, that all other churches must be subject to the church of Rome. The church of England may be a true church still, though she renounce obedience to the bishop of Rome.

But he undertakes to prove the church of Rome, not to be the mistress, "which as it may be construed, is invidious" (though she challenges all the authority of a mistress), "but the mother of other churches." And if he could do it, it were nothing to the present argument, which is not, whether the church of Rome be the mistress or mother (whichever he pleases) of all other churches, but whether the bare notes of a true church can prove this prerogative of the church of Rome, when there are other true churches besides herself. But yet his arguments to prove this are very considerable :—

First. Because "the church of Rome is acknowledged to be so by all in communion with her ;" which is indeed unanswerable. The church of Rome herself, and all in communion with her, say she is the mother of all other churches, and therefore she is so !

Secondly. "The learned King James the First did not hesitate to own her." Did King James the First own the Pope's supremacy ?

Thirdly. "To us in England, it is past denial, she is our mother and nurse too." Our step-mother we will own her, and nothing more. "But it is her authority that keeps up in England, above all other reformed churches, our bishops, our liturgy, our cathedrals ; by her records, her evidences, they stand the shock of antichristian adversaries." This is strange news ! We are indeed then more beholden to the church of Rome, than we thought ; but does the church of Rome allow our bishops, or our liturgy ? How then does her authority keep them up ? Truly, only because she cannot pull them down, and I pray God she may never be able to do it. She is not our "*principle*," as he speaks, and never shall be our *centre* again. His fourth argument is from Vitruvius, (which I believe is the first time it was used), from the situation of Rome for the empire of the world, which he thinks holds as well for the empire of the church. And so he concludes with "our Lord's eulogies of St. Peter's chair," which I could never meet

with yet. This is a formidable man, especially considering how many such writers the church of Rome is furnished with.

I added, that "they must prove, that the catholic church does not signify all the particular true churches that are in the world, but some one church, which is the fountain of catholic unity:" "That is," says he, "he should say, not only signify all, but *also* some one." No, Sir, I say, not signify all, but some one. The Cardinal proposes to find out by his notes the one true catholic church among all the communions of Christendom; and to prove that the church of Rome is this catholic church. Now I say, this is a senseless undertaking, unless he can prove that the catholic church does not signify all the particular true churches, which make the one church and body of Christ, but some one church, which is the fountain of catholic unity, and communion with which, gives the denomination of catholic churches to all others. Now what has our *Answerer* to say to this, besides his criticism of *all*, and *some one*? Truly he fairly grants it, and says, that "other churches, as daughters of the mother-church, are formally catholic; but take the mother by herself, and she is fundamentally catholic." But this, I say, ought to have been proved, that there is any one church which alone is the catholic church, as the foundation of catholic unity; which the Cardinal's notes cannot prove. That the catholic church began in one single church, as he says, I readily grant, and became catholic by spreading itself all over the world; but thus the church at Jerusalem, not at Rome, was the *matrix* (or producing mother), as he speaks, of the catholic church, which yet gave the church of Jerusalem no pre-eminency or authority over all other churches. But the church of Rome does not pretend herself to be fundamentally catholic in this sense, that she was the first church; but that by virtue of St. Peter's chair, the sovereign authority of the church is seated in her, and none can belong to the catholic church, but those who embrace her communion, and submit to her authority: which shows how well our *Answerer* understood this controversy, when he says, "Time was when the church of Jerusalem was so" (that is, the catholic church, as it was the first and only church, and the matrix of all other churches), "or the church of Antioch" (which never was so), "then why not the

church of Rome? What think you, in the sense given?" The church of Rome does not challenge to be the catholic church in the sense now given, *i. e.* as the first and original church; and if she did, all the world knows she was not; and the sense now given will not prove the church of Rome to be the catholic church in the sense in which she claims it. But this is intolerable, to dispute with men who do not understand what they dispute about. To hasten then to a conclusion; for if my reader, as I suspect, is by this time sick of reading, he may easily guess how sick I am of writing.

The last thing I objected against Bellarmine's notes was, "That they pretend to find out an infallible church by notes, on whose authority we must rely for the whole christian faith, even for the holy Scriptures themselves. For suppose he had given us the notes of a true church—before we can hence conclude that this church is the infallible guide, and uncontrollable judge of controversies, we must be satisfied that the church is infallible. This can never be proved but by Scripture; for unless Christ have bestowed infallibility on the church, I know not how we can prove she has it; and whether Christ have done it or not, can never be proved but by the Scriptures: so that a man must read the Scriptures, and use his own judgment to understand them, before it can be proved to him, that there is an infallible church; and therefore those who resolve the belief of the Scripture into the authority of the church, cannot without great impudence urge the authority of the Scriptures to prove the church's infallibility; and yet thus they all do; nay, prove their notes of the church from Scripture, as the Cardinal does." To which our adversary answers, "Infallibility and transubstantiation—God forgive all the stirs that have been made upon their account!" Amen, say I; and so far we are agreed.

He makes some little offers at proving an infallible judge, or at least a judge which must have the final decision of controversies, whether infallible or not: this is not the present dispute, but how we shall know whether the church be infallible or not? if by the Scriptures, how we shall know them without the church.

To avoid the argument in a circle here, of proving the church by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures by the church, he says, "There

are other convictions whereby the word of God, first pointed out by the church, makes out its divine original." But let him answer plainly, whether we can know the Scriptures to be the word of God, and understand the true sense of them, without the infallible authority of the church. If he will say we can, we are agreed ; and then we will grant that we may find out the church by the Scripture ; but then he must not require us afterwards to receive the Scripture and interpretation of it upon the authority of the church : and so farewell to Popery.

As for that advice I gave Protestants, "Where they dispute with Papist, whatever they do at other times, not to own the belief of the Scriptures, till they had proved them in their way by the authority of the church ; and then we should quickly see what blessed work they would make of it : how they would prove their church's infallibility, and what fine notes we should have of a church, when we had rejected all their scripture proofs, as we ought to do, till they have first satisfied us that theirs is the only true infallible church, upon whose authority we must believe the Scriptures, and everything else." He says, "It is very freakish, to say no worse, especially when I grant (to my cost) that we come to the knowledge of the Scripture by the uninterrupted tradition of credible witnesses, though I will not say, tradition of the church." But if he understands no difference between the authority of an infallible judge, and of a witness, he is not fit to be disputed with.

As for what I said, "That I would gladly hear what notes they would give a pagan to find out the true infallible church by," he honestly confesses, "There can be no place for such notes, when the authority of the Scripture is denied." Which is a plain confession how vain these notes are, till men believe the Scriptures ; and when they believe the Scriptures, they may find more essential notes of a church than these, viz. that true evangelical faith and worship which makes a church : but these notes the Cardinal rejects, because we cannot know the true faith and the Scriptures without the church ; and the *Justifier* of Bellarmine says, that there can be no place for the notes of the church, when the authority of the Scripture is denied ; and therefore they must first agree about this matter, before I can say any more to them.

But yet he says, "If the church should say to a Pagan, 'We have some books sacred with us, which we reckon are oracles of God, transmitted to us from generation to generation, for almost seventeen hundred years, which we and our forefathers have been versed in by daily explications, homilies, sermons. However you accord not with the contents of the book, yet we justly take ourselves to be the best judges and expounders of those oracles.' The pagan would say, 'The church spoke reason.'" But nothing to the purpose. For the question is, What notes of a church you will give to a Pagan, to convince him which is the true church, before he believes the Scripture; and here you suppose a pagan would grant that you were the best interpreters of books that you accounted divine, and had been versed in near seventeen hundred years. But would this make a Pagan believe the Scriptures? Or take your words for such notes of a church, as you pretended to produce out of Scripture? especially if he knew that there were other Christians who pretended to the Scriptures and the interpretation of them as well as yourselves; and the only way you had to defend yourselves against them, was, without the authority of Scripture, to make yourselves judges both of the Scriptures and the interpretation of them.

But he "knows none that are so senseless to resolve all their faith into the authority of the church." I perceive he does not know Cardinal Bellarmine, whom he undertakes to justify, as any one would guess by his way of justifying him: let but the Romanists quit this plea, that our faith must be resolved into the authority of the church, and I shall not despair to see our other disputes fairly ended.

For the conclusion of the whole, I observed, that it is a most senseless thing to resolve all our faith into the authority of the church; whereas it is demonstrable, that we must know, and believe most of the articles of the christian faith, before we can know whether there be any church or not. The order observed in the Apostles' Creed is a plain evidence of this; for all those articles which are before the holy catholic church, must in order of nature be known before it.

This he grants, that "in order of nature" all these articles of the Creed concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be

known, before we can know a church, but “to us the church is most known :” which is plain and downright nonsense ; if by “most known,” he means first known, which is the present dispute ; for whatever by the order of nature must be known first, must be first known without any distinction. For we speak now not of the methods of learning, but of resolving our faith into its first principles, and that surely must follow the order of nature. If the belief of the church’s authority be not in order of nature before the belief of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is a senseless thing to resolve our faith into that, which though we should grant were the first cause of knowing these, yet it is not the first principle in order of nature, into which faith must be resolved. Children indeed, as he observes, must receive their creed upon the authority of their parents, or of the church, which is more known to them than their creed ; as all other scholars must receive the first principles of any art or science upon the authority of their masters. But will you say, that the Latin tongue is resolved into the authority of the schoolmaster, because his scholars in learning the Latin tongue rely on his authority ? which yet is just as good sense as to say, that our faith must be resolved into the authority of the church, because the church teaches catechumens their catechism, and they receive it upon the authority of their parents, or priests. And hence indeed he may conclude, that a young catechumen knows his teachers before he knows his creed ; but to conclude that he knows a church first, as that signifies a blessed society, where salvation is to be had, is a little too much ; for that supposes that he knows the church before he has learned “*unam sanctam ecclesiam*,” “one holy church,” that is, before he has found the church in the creed, which is great forwardness indeed.

If he does not speak of children, but of men-catechumens, for such there were in the primitive church, and such he seems to speak of, when he says, “It is plain, that the catechumen knew there was a church, a blessed society, where salvation was to be had, before he would enter himself to be catechized in the faith,”—I do not doubt, but such men did know the church, before they submitted to the instructions of it ; but they knew Christ too, and believed in him, before they knew the church. For they first believed in Christ, and then joined themselves to that society

which professed the christian faith, that they might be the better instructed in the doctrines of Christianity ; that they might learn from the church what the christian faith is, and the reasons of it ; not that they would wholly resolve their faith into church authority.

But I find by our author, that the creed was made only for catechumens : for he says, “ The first person used at the beginning of the Creed, ‘ I believe,’ signifies—I, who desire to be made a member of the church, by the holy sacrament of initiation, do believe what hath been proposed to me first, and then comprehended in that fundamental breviare.”

What he designs by this, I cannot guess ; for still the catechumen professes to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before he believes the holy catholic church. But pray, what does *I* signify, when a bishop, or priest, or the pope himself repeats the Creed ?

If, as he concludes, “ we must believe Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before we can completely determine the church, and its definition,” (he should have said, before we can know whether there be a church or not, much less believe upon its authority,) then indeed, as he says, “ the Creed must begin with—I believe in God.” But if our faith must be resolved into the authority of the church, as the church of Rome teaches, and as these laborious endeavours of finding out a church by extra-essential notes suppose ; then the Creed, as I said, ought to begin with, “ I believe in the holy catholic church ; and upon the authority of this church, I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”

Thus I have, with invincible patience, particularly answered one of the most senseless pamphlets that ever I read ; and I hope it will not be wholly useless, for sometimes it is as necessary to expose nonsense, as to answer the most plausible arguments ; though, notwithstanding the mirth of it, I do not desire to be often so employed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE INTRODUCTION TO THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH	iii
The Visibility of the Catholic Church takes away the necessity of Notes or Signs to designate it by, especially of disputed Notes	1
The use of Notes to find out an infallible Church—and these appropriated by Bellarmine to the Church of Rome only—Fallacy of this	2
What Protestants and Papists severally intend by their Notes	3
The Protestant mode of discovering the Church by the essential proper- ties of a true Church	<i>ibid.</i>
Three Objections made to this by Bellarmine—Answers to these Objec- tions	4
Bellarmino's mode examined; First, to find out <i>which</i> is the true Church, <i>before</i> we know <i>what</i> a true Church is, and whether there be one; which latter point is an indispensable preliminary—This determined only by the authority of the Scriptures, and the exercise of private judgment in interpreting them	8
Secondly, Bellarmine gives Notes whereby to find out the true <i>Catholic</i> Church, before we know what a <i>particular</i> Church is—We must first know what a <i>particular</i> Church is	9
No other Note of a true Church but what belongs to every true particular Church, and that can be nothing but what is essential to a Church, and what all Churches agree in; viz. the <i>true</i> faith and worship of Christ	10
The 6th Note (the same as the 2d) and the 8th, are the chief Notes of this nature; and here the Protestant claim is as good, if not better, than the Popish	<i>ibid.</i>
His 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Notes, not properly Notes of a true Church, otherwise than as Testimonies of the common Christianity which is professed by all true Christians—His 13th, 14th, and 15th Notes, no Notes at all, because not always true	<i>ibid.</i>
His 3d and 4th Notes, not Notes of a <i>Church</i> , but only of <i>God's promises</i> made to the Church—His 1st Note doth not declare <i>what</i> a Church is, but in <i>what Communion</i> it is; and is no Note of a true Church, unless it be first proved that they are true Churches, which are in communion with each other	11

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
His 5th Note, common to the Greek and any other Church that has a succession of Bishops from the Apostolic Bishops—His 7th would serve his purpose, if he could prove it	12
No Notes of a true Church, but what belong to <i>all</i> true Churches . . .	<i>ibid.</i>
Thirdly, Another mystery in his forming these Notes is, to select out of all the Christian Churches, one which we must own for the Catholic, and reject all others as heretical, who refuse obedience to it	13
It must be first proved by the Romanists that the Catholic Church does not signify all the particular true Churches, but some one Church which all others are bound to submit to and communicate with . . .	14
Another design of Bellarmine is to find out such a Church on whose authority we must rely for the whole Christian Faith, even for the Scriptures	15
We must first be satisfied that the true Church is infallible; and this we can only know by Scripture, which a man must believe before it can be proved to him that there is an infallible Church	<i>ibid.</i>
The Church not the first object of our faith in Religion, since we ought to know and believe most of the Articles of the Christian Faith before we can know whether there be any Church or not	16

BELLARMINE'S
FIRST NOTE OF THE CHURCH
CONCERNING THE
NAME OF CATHOLIC*

EXAMINED.

BY DR. FREEMAN.

THAT the sincere preaching of the faith or doctrine of Christ, as it is laid down in the Scriptures, is the only sure, infallible mark of the church of Christ, is a truth so clear in itself, so often and fully proved by learned men of the Reformation, that it may justly seem a wonder, that any church, which is not conscious to herself of any errors and deviations from it, should refuse to put herself upon that trial. This gave being to the church of Christ at first; makes it *one*; and makes it *catholic*. According as this fares in any part or member of it, is that church distinguished and denominated; it will be true or false, pure or corrupt, sound or heretical, according as the faith it holds bears a conformity or repugnance to the written doctrine of our Saviour. An orthodox faith makes an orthodox church, but if her faith becomes tainted and heterodox, the church will be so too; and should it happen wholly to apostatize from the faith of Christ, it would wholly cease to be a catholic church. This may seem to be the reason, that the present church of Rome, being notoriously warped from truth, declines being examined and measured by this rule (having

* "Prima Nota, est ipsum catholicæ ecclesiæ et Christianorum nomen."—
BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, cap. iv.

indeed some reason to be against the Scripture that is so evidently against her), and endeavours to support herself with great names and swelling titles. Hence it is that we so often hear of the name of *catholic*, *antiquity*, *amplitude*, *unity*, *succession*, *miracles*, *prophecy*, and several others that their great Cardinal sets down, as so many perpetual and never-failing marks and characters to find out the true church, and to assert his own.

I shall in this short tract examine the first of these ; and that I may give it all the fair play imaginable, endeavour to represent it in its full force, and to its best advantage. Bellarmine makes it thus to speak for itself : “ The apostle, in 1 Cor. iii. 4, makes it the sign and mark of schismatics to be called after the name of particular men, though of the apostles themselves, whether of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas : and in the writings of the ancient fathers, the orthodox churches were known and distinguished by the name of Catholic ; and the conventicles of schismatics and heretics, by the names of their first authors : and therefore since the church of Rome is by all, even her bitterest adversaries, called catholic, and the several sects of the Reformed after the names of their particular doctors, as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and the like ; it follows that the name of catholic is not only a sure undoubted mark of the true church, but also that this church of Rome is that church.” This is his argument ; and much as he values his church upon it, I can see no more in it than this, that, because churches professing *the true orthodox faith* were anciently styled *catholic*, therefore all that have been styled catholic since, *be their faith what it will*, must be true and orthodox churches ; and because the apostle forbids Christians to be called after the name of particular men, though of ever so great eminence in the church ; and because those mentioned in the works of the ancients were really schismatics and heretics, that were so called, as the Valentinians, Marcionites, Montanists, and others ; therefore all that in after-ages shall be so nick-named, though out of malice and ill-will by their enemies, whilst they disown it themselves, must go for schismatics and heretics. This is so weak a topic, that I might justly break off here, having exposed it sufficiently by a bare representation of it : yet for the reader’s further information and satisfaction, I shall proceed to show these three things.

I. In what respect the name of catholic was esteemed, by some of the fathers in their time, a note of a catholic church ; and in what respects it will ever be a standing note of it.

II. That from the bare *name* of catholic, no argument can be drawn to *prove* a church to be catholic.

III. That the church of Rome, having egregiously corrupted the true catholic faith, *neither is nor deserves* the *name* of a *catholic* church.

I. In what respect the name of catholic was esteemed, by some of the fathers in their time, a note of the catholic church ; and in what respect it ever will be a standing note of it.

This, as evidently appears from their writings, and even from those testimonies cited by Bellarmine, was upon the account of the catholic *faith*, which in their time was generally and for the most part in conjunction with the name of catholic : and whenever it is so, it will be an infallible note of a catholic church. The catholic faith is that which was delivered by Christ himself to his apostles, and by them to the church, contained in those writings which they, by the extraordinary direction and assistance of the Holy Ghost, indited, and commended to the care and keeping of all the churches planted by them, as a sure unerring rule of faith and manners ; and was called catholic, both as it contains all things in it necessary to salvation, and as it was to be preached and published in all times, and successively in all places ; according to Vincentius Lirinensis's rule, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est* (what has been believed always, everywhere, and by all). It set out at Jerusalem, but was not to stop there, but from thence spread itself into all parts of the world. The apostles were first to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but not to them only : " Go, teach all nations," was our Saviour's commission to the apostles ; and " I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," &c. was God's promise to our Saviour. The christian church was not to be confined within the limits of one nation, like that of the Jews, within the small territories of Judea, but to be made up of " every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation."

Now in the first ages of Christianity, before the main body of the church was divided, only some few misled and seduced people

separating from it (and it being generally true, that they that bore the name of catholic, professed the true catholic faith, and those that were called after the name of particular men, had depraved and corrupted it), the very name catholic became a distinguishing note of a true church; and to be called after the name of the author of any sect, became the mark of an heretical and schismatical one: but yet this was not so much for the sake of the bare names, as for the things, the tenets and doctrines, signified by them. In this sense are all those fathers to be understood, quoted by Bellarmine and others, who seem to lay any stress upon the name: it was upon the account of the true faith, that in those times did for the most part, if not everywhere, accompany and go along with the name Catholic. Thus when St. Cyril of Jerusalem* advised his catechumens, when they should go into any city, to inquire for the catholic church, he gave this reason for it, "because there the true catholic faith is taught;" and in the same place adds, "the church is therefore called catholic, because it teaches all those truths all men are bound to know in order to salvation;" and upon the same account Pacianus† not unfitly said, "Christian is my name, and Catholic my surname; by the one I am distinguished from heathens, by the other from heretics and schismatics." Because in that age few or none went by the name of catholic, but those that were so indeed, and professed the true catholic faith. And as this is a true account of the original of the name catholic, and the weight that was laid upon it in those early times, so will the name ever continue to be a sure unerring note of the catholic church, whilst it is inseparably conjoined with the profession of the catholic faith: where this is taught and professed, there is a true church; where this fails in part or in whole, the church decays, or is lost.

II. No argument can be drawn from the *bare name* of catholic, to prove a church to be catholic.

This is so clear and evident in itself, that it neither needs, nor is scarce capable of, a proof: the church of Rome is called catholic, therefore she is catholic: the papists are called catholics, therefore they are catholics. This is such a way of reasoning as every man must be ashamed to own, except those who have the confidence

* Catech. cap. xviii.

† Epist. ad Sympron. de Nom. Cath.

to say any thing, when they are not able to say any thing to the purpose. For,

1. The christian church was not known by the name of catholic at the beginning ; and therefore the name can be no essential note of it. We find no mention of this name in the writings of the New Testament : we read, that the disciples were called Christians at Antioch ; but as to the name *catholic*, principally respecting the diffusive nature of the church, the church could not properly be so called, till the christian faith had been more generally and universally preached in the world. Therefore Pacianus, in the fore-quoted place, confesses that the name *catholic* was not used in the church in the days of the apostles ; and from thence some have concluded, that the Creed which goes under the Apostles' name, having this denomination of the church inserted in it, Catholic Church, was not composed by them, but by some holy bishops of a later standing in the church : yet must it be confessed, that the name is very ancient, and of an early date, it being found in the oriental creeds, particularly those of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and in the inscriptions of St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude's epistles, which are all styled general or catholic epistles.

2. Names are oftentimes arbitrarily, and at random, and falsely, imposed on things ; and therefore nothing can be concluded from them : the church of Sardis had a name to *live*, but was *dead* ; the church of Laodicea gloried that she was *rich*, but was *poor* ; many on earth are called gods, who are but mortal men ; Simon Magus was called the great power of God, but was a child of the devil ; Mahomet a great prophet, but was an impostor ; Diana the great goddess of the Ephesians, but was an idol ; our blessed Saviour foretold that many should come in his name, each saying, I am Christ, but were deceivers. Thus, you see, things and persons are not always as they are called ; nor do I believe the Papists are willing that their church should be thought in reality to be according to the signification of some names that are too liberally bestowed upon her ; the bishop of Rome calls himself Christ's Vicar, but others, Antichrist ; the church of Rome styles herself the Catholic Church, but others, the Whore of Babylon. I do as little justify the fastening such odious names upon them, as

approve their arrogating to themselves the other glorious titles ; yet this I am pretty well assured of, that a man of ordinary abilities may say as much to prove the pope Antichrist, and the Romish church an harlot, as the whole college can to justify the pretence of the one to be “ Christ’s vicar,” or of the other to be his “ undefiled spouse.”

3. Names are oftentimes imposed on things, and so used, as marks of distinction only, without any farther design of representing their natures and qualities by them : Thus we call the Romanists, Catholics ; not that we think they are truly so, but in compliment, or irony, in compliance with common use, or by way of discrimination from other Christians : and in the same respects, it may be supposed, that they call us the “ Reformed :” and if they think this is a good argument to prove them catholics, we have the same, and it will hold as strong, to prove us reformed. They call us reformed, therefore we are reformed, is as good an argument as, we call them catholics, therefore they are catholics. In this sense are those words of St. Austin,* cited by Bellarmine, to be understood ; “ That should a stranger happen in any city to inquire even of an heretic, where he might go to a catholic church, the heretic would not dare to send him to his own house or oratory.” Not that that heretic did believe, that those that were there called catholics did hold the true catholic doctrine, for ther he could not have believed his own ; but looking upon it as a bare name of distinction, he directed him to that assembly of Christians that were so called. St. Austin seems here to suppose a case, as if a traveller entering into a city, where both popish and reformed churches were allowed, should chance to meet a protestant, and of him inquire the way to a catholic church, and he direct him to a popish one ; or a papist, and of him inquire the way to a reformed church, and he direct him to a protestant one. It would not therefore follow, that either the one or the other did believe either church to answer and correspond with its name, that the popish was catholic, or the protestant reformed ; but that they were words of vulgar use, whereby the churches might be known from one another, but not the true church known from the false.

* Cont. Æpist. Fundam. c. 4.

4. It does not follow, that because the name of catholic in that time, when it was for the most part in conjunction with the catholic faith, was a sure note of a true church, it must always be so, even when the name and thing are parted. It was not long before the christian church became miserably torn and rent asunder, divided into many and very great bodies, all pretending to catholicism. By what mark now is the catholic church to be known? Not by the name, surely, when all parties laid claim to it, and the grossest heretics, such as the Manichæans themselves, as St. Austin tells us, who had the least to show for it, coveted and gloried in it. Have never any heretics or schismatics been styled catholics? nor ever any orthodox styled heretics? The Greek church is called catholic, and yet the church of Rome will have her an heretical one: the Donatists appropriated to themselves that ample title; and yet St. Austin thought them no better than schismatics: the Arians called themselves Catholics, and the orthodox, Homousians and Athanasians; but neither the one was the more, nor the other the less catholic for what they were called. Truth is always the same; and the nature of things remains unalterable, let men fix on them what names they please. By this rule then is the true church to be known, not because it bears the name of catholic—for that a church may do, and yet be guilty of schism and heresy—but because it professes the true faith; and then though it be in name heretic, it is in reality catholic: this is Lactantius's rule, to discern the true church by the true religion; "That church alone," says he, "is catholic, that retains the true worship of God."* And St. Austin,† in his disputes with the Donatists, where the true church was, appeals to the Scripture, as the only infallible judge. Amongst many others to this purpose, he hath these words: "Let us not hear, I say this, and thou sayest that; but let us hear, Thus saith the Lord."

5. Again, does it follow, that, because the being called after the names of particular men in that age, when all so called were for the most part corrupt in the faith, was a sure brand of

* *Instit. lib. iv. c. ult.* "Sola catholica est quæ verum cultum retinet."

† "Non audiamus, hæc dico, hæc dicis; sed audiamus, hæc dicit Dominus, &c. Ibi quæramus ecclesiam." *Epist. 166. De Unit. Eccl. c. 2.*

schismatics and heretics, it must ever be so ? May not names and titles be unjustly and maliciously imposed ? If the churches of the reformed must go for heretics and schismatics, merely because they are distinguished by the names of those men that were the first and most eminent instruments in that blessed work, as of Lutherans, Calvinists, Zuinglians, and the like ; is there not the same reason, that the several orders in the church of Rome, that go under the names of their particular founders, as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, Jansenists, and Molinists, and others, be esteemed so too ? If there be any difference, the advantage of reason is on our side ; since the reformed assume not those names to themselves ; and though they deservedly honour the memories of those men, and with thankful hearts embrace the reformation God was pleased by their ministry to make in the church, yet they by no means affect to be called after their names. They own no name but Christian or Catholic, when it signifies persons adhering to the true catholic faith : the others are nick-names fastened on them by their adversaries out of scorn or malice, to represent them to the world, as far as they are able, as so many schismatics from the catholic church, and as having other leaders than Christ and his apostles. But those in the church of Rome that are denominated from their particular founders, give themselves those appellations, and seem to prefer them before that truly Catholic one of christian, which while with some neglect they leave to the common people, they glory and pride themselves in the other ; so that if this note of an heretic is valid, it turns with great force against themselves, who are really guilty of it, and not against us, whom they will make guilty of it, but are not.

III. The church of Rome having egregiously corrupted the catholic faith or religion, neither is, nor deserves the name of a catholic church.

Whether she is guilty of this or not, will be best seen by comparing her doctrine in several points with that delivered by Christ, and left upon record by his holy apostles ; for though the church of Rome will not allow the Scriptures to be the whole and perfect rule of faith and manners, yet they acknowledge them to be the word of God ; and granting that, they must acknowledge, that all those doctrines and practices that are forbidden by them,

are corruptions and depravations of it. Let us then bring their faith to the touch-stone : How readest thou ?

The Scripture says,* “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,” Matt. iv. 10. Which words evidently appropriate all kinds and all degrees of religious worship unto God, they being in answer to the devil’s temptation, who required but the lowest degree of worship ; the devil acknowledging the right he had of disposing of the kingdoms of the world to be *only derivative*, not natural (“they were *delivered to me*,”) at the same time that he confessed himself not to be the supreme God, and consequently cannot be supposed to claim the highest degree of worship.

The Scripture says,† “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ?” Making God alone the object of prayer, who is the only object of men’s faith and confidence, Rom. x. 14.

The Scripture says,‡ “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all,” 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

The church of Rome says, “that angels and saints are to be worshipped and prayed unto.” (Catech. Rom. par. 3. cap. 2. not. 8, 9.)

“Though with an inferior kind of worship, not the same that is given to God.” (Ibid.)

The church of Rome says, “It is good and profitable to pray to saints and angels.” (Concil. Trid. Sess. 25. de Invocat.)

The church of Rome prays to saints as intercessors, and teaches that God bestows many favours upon men by their merit, grace, and intercession. (Catech. Rom. par. 3. cap. 2. not. 12.)

* See Discourse of the Object of Religious Worship. 1685.

† See Discourse concerning Invocation of Saints. 1684.

‡ Two others in 1686.

The Scripture says, as it is in the Second Commandment,* "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing, &c. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them," Exod. xx. 4.

Where, we see, all use of images in the worship of God, whether carved or painted, are expressly forbidden without any exception or distinction.

The Scripture commands *all* persons without distinction,† "to read, to search, to meditate on the Scriptures, that the word of God dwell in them richly in all wisdom," Luke xvi. 29. John v. 39. Psalm i. 2. Col. iii. 16.

The church of Rome requires, that due worship and veneration be given to saints, such as kissing, uncovering the head, and falling down before them; and denounces a curse against those that think otherwise. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 25. Catech. Rom. par. 3. cap. 2. not. 24.)

And then, to cover the shame and guilt of this, claps the Second Commandment to the First, and by making it of the same sense with that, makes it have none of its own, nor of any signification.

The church of Rome allows not this liberty to the laity, but upon license that is not easily to be obtained; and says that "more hurt than good comes by the reading of them," (Reg. Ind. Libr. Prohib. Reg. 4.) Nay, a liberty to read them under such a restriction was thought too much, and therefore the faculty of granting such licenses was, by the order of Pope Clement the Eighth, quite taken away. (Reg. Ind. Libr. Prohib. Auct. Sexti V. et Clem. VIII. Obser. circa 4. regul.)

* See particular Examination of Monsieur de Meaux in the Articles of Invocation of Saints, and Worship of Images. 1686.

† See Treatise on "Search the Scriptures." 1685. As also the Lay Christian's Obligation to read the Scriptures. 1687.

The Scripture expressly forbids prayers in an unknown tongue, as altogether unprofitable and unedifying in the church,* 1 Cor. xiv. 2. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men," ver. 11. "If I know not the meaning of the voice, he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me," ver. 16. "If thou shalt bless with the spirit" (by the gift of an unknown tongue) "how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, since he understands not what thou sayest?"

The Scripture says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; they rest from their labours," Rev. xiv. 13. "To-day," said our Saviour to the repenting thief on the cross, "shalt thou be with me in Paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. And Paradise is acknowledged by them to be a place of peace and joy. (Bellar. de Sanct. Beat. lib. 1. cap. 3. test. 4.)

The church of Rome strictly enjoins such and no other, viz. in the Latin tongue; and denounces a curse against those who say that "Divine service ought to be administered only in the vulgar tongue." (Concil. Trident. Sess. 22. cap. 8. and can. 9.) Hereby making the people perform to God an unreasonable service, whilst it takes from them the knowledge of the prayers offered in their name, and suffers them not to understand their own desires.

The church of Rome says, that souls who die in a state of grace, but are not sufficiently purged from their sins, go first into purgatory, a place of torment bordering near upon hell; from which yet their deliverance may be expedited by the suffrages, that is, prayers, alms, and masses, said and done by the faithful that are alive, in their behalf. (Bellar. de Purgat. lib. 2. cap. 6. Catech. Rom. par. 1. cap. 6. not. 3. Concil. Trid. Sess. 25. Decret. de Purgat.) Now how this *resting from their labours, and being in paradise*, which the Scriptures tell us is a place of

* See Discourse of Divine Service in an Unknown Tongue. 1635.

The Scripture says, that "the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 7. And that God for Christ's sake hath "forgiven us all our trespasses." Eph. iv. 32. Col. ii. 13.

The Scripture says,* that when our Saviour instituted the blessed sacrament of his body and blood, he commanded it to be administered and received in both kinds, the cup as well as the bread; saying, "Drink ye all of this," Matt. xxvi. 27. Neither were the disciples any more priests when they took the cup, than when they received the bread; for if they were made priests by our Saviour's pronouncing these words, "Do this in remembrance of me;" they became so before they had taken, at least before they had eaten the bread, as well as before they had re-

joy and rest, can be consistent with the pains and fire of *purgatory*, which Bellarmine tells us is hotter than hell itself, is past my apprehension.

The church of Rome says, that souls are to continue in purgatory till they have made full satisfaction for their sins, and are thoroughly purged from them; and that whoever says, that there is no debt of temporal punishment to be paid, either in this world or in purgatory, before they can be admitted into heaven, is accursed. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 6. can. 30.)

The church of Rome says, the cup is not to be administered to the laity, and gives many reasons for it, "lest the blood of Christ should be spilt; lest the wine kept for the sick should fret; lest wine may not always be had," or "lest some may not be able to bear the smell or taste of it." Whether these are sufficient reasons or not, the Council of Trent enjoins all to believe them so, under an anathema. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 21. can. 1, 2.) The Council of Constance acknowledges that our Saviour instituted the sacrament in both kinds, and that it so continued in the church of

* See Discourse of the Communion in One Kind, in Answer to Monsieur de Meaux. 1687.

ceived the cup ; it not appearing that Christ made any pause betwixt his saying, "Take, eat, this is my body," and his saying, "Do this in remembrance of me;" but spake them, as it were, in a breath, as one continued sentence ; and then upon this account the whole sacrament, the bread as well as the wine, must belong only to the priests.

The Scripture says,* that the bread and wine in the sacrament, even after consecration, is bread and wine still, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. And it is very evident that when our Saviour said, "This is my body,"† he meant it only as the representation of his body ; a manner of speech well understood by the Jews, who commonly said the same thing of the paschal lamb : they called it the *body* of the *passover*, when it was but the *memorial* ; a figure usual in sacraments, and indeed essential to them.

Rome many centuries ; and yet, notwithstanding both these authorities, it sacrilegiously robs the people of the cup. (Concil. Constan. Sess. 13.)

The church of Rome says, that the bread and wine in the eucharist, by the priests pronouncing these words, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," "This is my body," is transubstantiated into the natural body and blood of Christ ; the species or accidents only of the bread and wine remaining ; and hath made it an article to be believed by all, under an anathema. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 13. de Real. Præs. cap. 1.) Cornelius à Lapide tells us, that it was the opinion of some of their grave divines, that this change is made "after so powerful and effectual manner, that if Christ had not been incarnated before, the force of this charm would have incarnated him, and clothed him with human nature."

* See Discourse of Transubstantiation. 1685.

† Another, of the Real Presence, &c. in Answer to Two Discourses from Oxford. 1687.

“ Adeo potenter et efficaciter, ut si Christus necdum esset incarnatus, per hæc verba (Hoc est corpus meum) incarnaretur, corpusque humanum assumeret. (Cornel. à Lapid. Com. in Esa. cap. 7.)

The Scripture says, “ that Christ needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, &c., for this he did once, when he offered up himself,” Heb. vii. 27. And that “ without blood there is no remission of sins,” Heb. ix. 22.

The church of Rome says, that in the sacrifice of the mass Christ is offered as often as that is celebrated ; and that though therein he be unbloodily offered, yet it is a true propitiatory sacrifice for the sins both of the living and dead. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 22. cap. 1.) And declares the person accursed that denies any part of this. (Ibid.)

In all these particulars, you see, (and several other might be instanced), the faith and doctrine of the church of Rome bears a manifest repugnance to the gospel of Christ. Now if the Holy Scripture may be allowed so much as to be a rule of faith and manners in those things it particularly treats of, the church of Rome, contradicting that rule in those things, must be condemned for a corrupter of the christian faith or doctrine. And it having been thus made evident that she holds not the true catholic faith, it is as evident that she is not, and consequently deserves not to be called, a catholic church.

THE
SECOND NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;

VIZ.

A N T I Q U I T Y.*

BY BISHOP PATRICK.

IT is a clear sign that the case of a church is a bad one, when the most learned and witty defenders of it, commend it to the world by such marks and characters, whereby they say it may be known, as are neither proper to it alone, nor in truth belong to it; but more truly and evidently belong to them whom they oppose.

That this is the case of the present church of Rome, in that famous note, "Antiquity," which Bellarmine and others make a mark of the true church, I will clearly and distinctly demonstrate, by showing these three things:—

I. That the plea of bare antiquity is not proper to the church, but common to it with other societies of *false* religion.

II. That true antiquity is not on the side of the present *Roman* church. But,

III. That it is truly on *ours*.

I. It is confessed by all, even by them who make *antiquity* a mark of the church, that the notes of a thing must be *proper* to that of which they are a note, and not *common* to it with other things: which quite destroys this note of antiquity upon a double account.

* "Secunda Nota est antiquitas."—BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*. lib. iv. cap. v.

First, because that which is proper to a thing is inseparable from it, and did ever belong to it since it had a being; and can at no time, without the destruction of its being, be absent from it. This every freshman in learning knows; and by that may know, that antiquity is not a note proper to the church, because it did not always belong to the church: for there was a time when the church was new. Which was objected to it by the adversaries of our religion; and the defenders of the church answered the very same to them then, that we do to the Romanists now; as will appear in the second thing I have to observe.

Secondly, That other societies have laid claim to this note, and it could not be denied them; and therefore it is not a proper note whereby the true church may be certainly known, being common to it with others that are not of the church.

1. For, first, the Samaritans claimed it against the Jews, as appears from the woman's discourse with our Saviour, John iv. 20: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," &c. They had done so for many ages before they worshipped in Jerusalem. For it was here God appeared unto Abraham, who here also built an altar when he came first out of Chaldea (Gen. xii. 6, 7). Here Jacob likewise built an altar when he came out of Mesopotamia, (Gen. xxxiii. 20.) Here there was a sanctuary in the days of Joshua, who gave his last charge to Israel, and made a covenant with them in this place (Gen. xxiv. 25, 26). Here the patriarchs were buried (ver. 32). Nay, hereabouts was Shiloh (Judg. xxi. 19), where, by the order of Joshua, the tabernacle, and the ark of God were settled, long before it was brought to Jerusalem (Josh. xviii. 1, 2), which was all this time in the hands of the Jebusites. To which plea the Jews could not make an answer, but by maintaining this principle: "That not the antiquity of place, but the authority of God's precept. was to be their direction in this case." And God, it appeared by the holy books, had chosen Jerusalem to place his name there.

2. Thus the Jews themselves argued against Christ; that he did not follow the tradition of the elders, which had been derived to them from ancient times (Mark vii. 1, &c.); and against Christians, whom they call the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts xxiv. 5), as much as to say heretics newly sprung up from Jesus of Nazareth.

3. And thus the Pagans argued against them both ; particularly against the Christians, saying to St. Paul at Athens, “ May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is ? ” (Acts xvii. 19.) And in after-times calling it, a novel religion, a novel name ; and disputing that their religion was the truer, because they were strengthened and defended by the authority of antiquity.

So we read in Arnobius,* and in Symmachus,† and Prudentius,‡ and many others whom I omit ; contenting myself with St. Austin alone, because he gives a most pertinent answer to this poor pretence ; which will as well serve us against the papists, as it did him against the pagans, who contended that what they held was true, because of its antiquity. “ As if,” saith he, “ antiquity, or ancient custom, should carry it against the truth. Thus murderers, adulterers, and all wicked men, may defend their crimes ; for they are ancient practices, and began at the beginning of the world. Though from hence they ought rather to understand their error ; because that which is reprehensible and filthy, is thereby proved to have been ill begun, &c. ; nor can it be made honest and unprovable, by having been done long ago.”

But this is a part of the devil’s craft and subtilty, as he excellently observes in the same place, “ who, as he invented those false worships, and sprinkled some juggling tricks to draw men into them, so he took such course, that in process of time the fallacy was commended, and the filthy invention was excused, by being derived from *antiquity* : for by long custom that began not to seem filthy, which was so in itself. The irrational vulgar began to worship demons, or dead men, who appeared to them as if they had been gods ; which worship being drawn down into custom of long continuance, thinks thereby to be defended, as if it were the truth of reason. Whereas the reason of truth is not from custom (which is from antiquity), but from God ; who is proved to be God, not by long continuance (or antiquity) but by eternity.” §

Let this be applied to our present business, and it is sufficient to show, that *bare antiquity* cannot be a note of truth : for there are very ancient errors. Which is so evident, that it is a wonder that

* Lib. ii.

† Ad Valentin. Theodos. et Arcad.

‡ In Agone Romani Martyris.

§ Quæst. ex Vet. et Novo Testamento, Q. exiv.

such a man as Bellarmine was should let this pass the muster among the notes he reckons up of the truth of his church ; which he could intend for no more than to make a show, and not for any substantial service : of which this is a demonstration, that he had no sooner named *antiquity*, as the second note of the church, but, discerning it would stand him in no stead, he immediately sets it aside, and cunningly slides to another thing ; for thus he argues, “ Without doubt the true church is ancients than the false ; as God was before the devil : and consequently we read the good seed was sown first before the tares.” *

But who doth not see that these two things are widely different, the one from the other—antiquity and priority ; that which is ancient, and that which is first ? Whatsoever is first, as applied here to the church of Christ, is undoubtedly true ; but whatsoever is ancient, is not always so ; unless it be of such antiquity that it be also first. There is a double antiquity therefore, one in respect of us, the other absolute and in itself. This last sort of antiquity is the same with what is first : to which we are desirous to go, to which we are willing to stand, and by which we would be judged. By the rule which Tertullian lays down in several of his books,† we would bring our cause and church to be tried ; “ That is truest which was first ; that first, which was from the beginning ; that from the beginning, which was from the apostles : and in like manner, that from the apostles, which in the churches of the apostles was most sacred, viz. that which they read in their holy writings. This is our antiquity, (as he speaks in his famous Apology) ‘ *præstructa divinæ literaturæ*,’ ‡ ‘ built before upon the divine learning.’ This is the rule of faith which came from Christ, transmitted to us by his companions ; to whom all those who speak otherways, will be found to be of later date.”

But to this they of the church of Rome will by no means agree ; they do not like to be tried only by the holy Scriptures, which is the true antiquity ; that is, undoubtedly *first*, before all other traditions. A very bad sign this of an *infallible* note, that they

* De Ecclesia, lib. iv. cap. 5.

† Contra Marcion. lib. iv. cap. 5. adv. Praxeam. cap. 2. De Præscript. cap. 30.

‡ Apologia, cap. 47.

dare not abide by the *Scriptures*, but cry up other traditions ; that is, boast of what is *later*, not what is *first*. And what is after the *first*, though it could be proved to be of great antiquity, cannot certainly be relied on ; because there are errors and heresies so ancient, that they sprung up presently after the first truth.

Mere antiquity, therefore, is not a good proof. For though the devil be not first, yet he is of great antiquity ; being the old (*ὁ ἀρχαῖος*) that ancient serpent ; who was a liar, as well as a murderer, from the *beginning* ; and was so crafty, as in process of time to make use of this argument, to prove he was the *Ancient of Days*, that is, God. And if there had not been something else, whereby he might have been discovered to be a serpent, who could have contradicted him, or confuted his doctrine and worship, if they had been to be tried by bare antiquity ? Which is a proof so insufficient, that God himself, as ye heard before out of St. Austin, is *not* proved to be God by *antiquity*, but by *eternity*.

Truth and error were born so near together, that after a long tract of time, they could not be distinguished merely by their age. No sooner was man created, but this serpent, by his subtlety, beguiled Eve. And immediately after our redemption, he attempted again to “ corrupt men’s minds from the simplicity that is in Christ,” (2 Cor. xi. 3 ; 1 Thess. iii. 5). And accordingly, as there was a church of Christ, so there was, together therewith, a “synagogue of Satan,” (Rev. iii. 9). There were “depths of Satan also,” and a “mystery of iniquity,” (which wrought even in the apostles’ days) as well as a “mystery of godliness,” and the “deep things of God.” Which wicked doctrines running down to posterity, made use, at length, of the plea of antiquity to give them countenance and support. Nor could it be denied, though it was proved to be a mere deceit ; for it was refuted by the fathers in such remarkable words as these (which give a deadly blow to the like plea of the present Roman church) : “Custom without truth, is but the antiquity of error. And there is a short way for religious and simple minds to find out what is truth : for if we return to the beginning and original of divine tradition, human error ceases. Thither let us return to our Lord’s original, the evangelical beginning, the apostolical tradition : and hence let the reason of our act arise, from whence order and the beginning arose.

“ If, therefore, Christ alone is to be heard, we ought not to regard what another before us thought fit to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did. For we ought not to follow the custom of man, but the truth of God ; since God himself speaks thus by the prophet Isaiah, ‘ In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men.’ Which very words our Lord again repeats in the gospel, ‘ Ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may establish your own tradition.’ ” Thus St. Cyprian.*

With whom Tertullian,† (whom he was wont to call his master) agrees, in many memorable sayings. “ Nobody can prescribe against the truth ; neither space of times, nor the patronages of persons, nor the privilege of countries. From which things indeed, custom having gotten a beginning, by ignorance or simplicity, and being grown strong by succession, pleads against truth. But our Lord Christ calls himself the Truth, not Custom. Nor doth novelty so much confute heresy, as truth doth. Whatsoever is against truth, that will be heresy, even old custom.

“ Truth doth not stand ‡ in need of old custom to make it be believed, nor doth heresy fear the charge of novelty. That which is plainly false, is made respectable by antiquity. For why should I not call that false, whose proof is false ? Why should I believe Pythagoras, who tells lies that he may be believed ?”

I omit all the rest : having said enough to show, that if antiquity itself be to be credited, we ought not to depend upon antiquity alone, but seek for ancient truth.

This leads me to the second thing I undertook to show, That the present church of Rome vainly pretends to true antiquity, *i. e.* to ancient truth.

II. The antiquity of a church doth not consist in the antiquity of the place where it is seated : for a new worship may come into an ancient place of worship ; as the new altar of Ahaz was introduced into the Temple at Jerusalem, where he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. (2 Kings xvi. ; 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.) Nor doth it consist merely in the antiquity of its founders : for the apostles founded many churches, which had all the same title to antiquity

* Epist. lxiii. ad Cæcilium Fratrem, et lxxiv. ad Pompeium. ed. Oxon.

† Lib. de Veland. Virg. cap. 1.

‡ Lib. de Anima, cap. 28.

in this regard ; and yet continued not such churches as they left them, but decayed (some of them) so fast, that what truth and goodness remained among them was ready to die, even before all the apostles were dead, (Rev. iii. 2.) But it consists in the preservation of the ancient truth, entire and uncorrupted, which it received from the apostles, and which made it, at first, to be a church.

Those things are truly ancient, which persist in the same state, after a long tract of time, wherein they were at their beginning. For if they have suffered any change in that which belongs to their being and constitution, they have lost their antiquity, and become another thing than they were at the first. Now to know this, we must inquire into the nature of the thing itself, and understand (for instance) what it is that makes a society to be the church of God. And all agree it is the christian truth : in which, if it have suffered alteration, (that is, doth not hold the same christian doctrine it did at the beginning, but hath introduced errors and lies under the pretence of ancient truth) it is not the same church it was at first ; and therefore hath not that mark of true antiquity, which will prove it to be such as it pretends.

Now that this is the case of the present church of Rome, is evident by that alteration they have made in the ancient Creed ; to which they have added as many more articles as there were at first, and thereby made such a change in their church, (for a change is made by adding, as well as taking away) as makes it not to be the same ancient church which the apostles founded at the beginning.

This charge they have no way to avoid ; nor can they by any other means maintain that they are such an ancient church as Christ and his apostles settled, but by this *ratiocination*, as Bel-larmine calls it. That in all great changes of religion, these six things may be ever shown : 1. The author of that change. 2. The new doctrine that was brought in. 3. The time when it began. 4. The place where. 5. Who opposed it. 6. And who joined themselves to it. None of which can be shown in the church of Rome, since the apostles' times ; and therefore there hath been no change at all made in it, but it remains the same it was at first, without any alteration.

Which is a reasoning built upon grounds so notoriously false, that it scarce deserves the name of a poor piece of sophistry.

1. For first, it is contrary to all history and experience ; which show us there have been great changes, the authors, and the beginnings, &c. of which, cannot now be known ; though no man can doubt there hath been an alteration made. For the body, spiritual and civil, is like the body natural ; in which as there are some diseases which make such a violent and sudden assault, that one may say at what moment they began : so there are other, which grow so insensibly, and by such slow degrees, that none can tell when the first alteration was made, and by what accident, from a good habit of body to a bad. Thus we are sure a man is in a deep consumption, when we see him worn away to skin and bone, though no body can tell the precise time when, nor by what means, nor where, and in what company his blood began to be tainted. And thus we are sure there is a *gangrene*, (as St. Paul calls heresy) when we see it corrode the body of the church ; though it crept in so secretly at first, and so indiscernibly, that it was not suspected, nor can always be traced to its first occasion and original. No, the tares in the field (which is another example whereby our Lord himself illustrates this matter) had taken root before they were espied ; for they were sown in the night, while men slept, and could take no notice of it, so that all that could be known was this, that his enemy had done it ; that is, the tares were not from our Saviour, nor were first sown ; but were of a later and quite different original : but by what particular instrument the enemy sowed them, at what hour of the night, by what hand, and when, did not appear ; for the matter was carried so secretly, and in the dark, that the servants, who knew of the sowing of the good seed in the field, wondered to see the bad, and asked, “ Whence hath it tares ? ” They did not know how they came there, any more than we may be able now to know how errors came into the church ; but that they were there, they knew, and were sure ; as we are sure there are false doctrines in the church of Rome, that were not of our Saviour’s planting.

2. Nor do the examples whereby they illustrate this ratiocination, serve to any purpose, but to show the falseness of it. They

can name, they say, the authors and beginnings of all the ancient heresies ; for instance, the heresy which affirmed there were two persons in Christ, was begun by Nestorius, in the year 431. Which is not true ; for though then it took its name from so great a bishop, who maintained it, yet the heresy had been before, from an unknown beginning ; it being mentioned by St. Ambrose, in the foregoing age, in his book of the Incarnation. The like may be said of the Arian heresy, whose beginning they date in the year 324 ; but it was born long before, among the Gnostic heretics, and only got reputation by so noted a man as Arius. Nay, some of the most learned doctors in the present Roman church have taken a great deal of pains to make the world believe, that Tertullian, and a number of other ancient fathers, were infected with it. So uncertain are they in their discourses about these matters.

3. Which, if they were true, would uphold the greatest impieties. For what will become of the christian religion, if the traditional law of the Jews be true ? And according to this way of reasoning, it must pass for truth, that it came from Mount Sinai, by word of mouth, as the written law did ; for none can show its original, much less name the authors of the several traditions, and who opposed them, &c. Nay, the worship of the heathen gods was supported by this argument, as is excellently observed by Clemens Alexandrinus, who tells the Gentiles, “ That fables and time had advanced dead men into the number of the gods. For though things present, being familiar to us, are neglected, yet those which are past and gone, being out of the reach of confutation, χρόνον ἀδηλία, by the obscurity and uncertainty of time, have honour invented for them. By which means, those that are dead long ago, glorying τῷ πολλῷ τῆς πλάνης χρόνῳ, in a long time of error, are accounted gods by posterity.”*

The same may be said for the lying oracles among them ; the beginnings and first authors of which cannot be traced.

4. But we have an instance of this in the Roman church itself, where there is an acknowledged change ; and yet they themselves are not able to tell who first began it, because it crept in by insensible degrees. The communion, in *one* kind, was not used

* Admon. ad Gentes, pp. 36, 37.

for above a thousand years ; but being begun in some churches, (they themselves cannot tell which, nor when) grew to be a general custom, not long before the council of Constance, in these western parts of the world ; and there was established as a law. But it did not begin by the decree of any bishop, nor was carried on by any public order ; and if you ask them who first set it on foot, they will tell you, that it doth not appear.

Therefore the *second* alone of those *six* things being proved, that new doctrines and practices have been brought in, of which we are very certain, there needs none of the rest : but we are sure there was a time, and authors of them, and people that embraced them, though we should not be able (for want of ancient records that are lost, or because things that come in insensibly, cannot in every age be noted and recorded) to tell the very time, and place, and persons ; when, and where, and by whom they were introduced.

All this is not said by us, because we are not able to give an account of the other parts of *ratiocination* ; but only to show the frivolousness of such discourses as these, in which they of the church of Rome place their main retreat. For we can tell, nay, their own authors have told us, when and by whom many things were brought into their church, which were not there in the beginning. Polydore Virgil, if I had room to insert his words, would furnish us with several instances ; but I shall content myself with two, which were at no great distance from each other.

The *first* is their grand article of faith, about the *papal authority*. We know, and have often told them, by what steps it grew to the height wherein now it is, or would be ; when the bishops of Rome began to exceed their bounds ; how they were opposed and snubbed ; who, (and by whom,) was first declared the universal bishop and head of the church. Victor began the dance ; Zosimus, after some others, followed it ; Boniface continued it ; Celestine carried it on ; who met with so sharp a rebuke from the African bishops for his intrusion into their affairs, upon the pretence of a forged canon of the Nicene council, as is sufficient to show that his ambition and craft were greater than his authority. The attempts of the rest are as notorious, and so is the

opposition they met withal, till at last Boniface the Third procured to himself from Phocas, the title of *Universal Bishop*; and to his church, the title of *Head of all Churches*. All this we can justify out of authentic records; but it is not in their power to name so much as one man that owned the universal jurisdiction of the Roman bishop over the whole church, till that time; that is, till about six hundred years after our Saviour's birth. For though Bellarmine alleges an epistle of Justinian's, wherein he calls the church of *Rome*, the *Head of all Churches*, yet it signifies nothing, but that they are at a loss for want of proofs; because, as it is with great reason suspected to be spurious, so it can intend no more than head of the churches of the west; for in an undoubted edict of his, he calls the church of *Constantinople* by the same name, the *Head of all other Churches*, i. e. chief of those in the east: which is so certain, that their own pope, Gregory, not much above a year before this arrogant title was assumed, most vehemently disdained it, or rather thundered against it. Nor can they name one man in the whole church, for so long a time, that believed their present definition of the catholic church, much less the power of the pope to depose kings, which none claimed till Gregory VII.; that is, till above a thousand years after our blessed Saviour. Insomuch that their fore-named champion,* being to prove this deposing power out of ancient authors, is able to say no more than this; "I have alleged above seventy famous writers, some of which flourished more than *five hundred years ago*." A goodly business! a glorious show of antiquity! instead of the *first* five hundred years after Christ, to refer us to the *last five* hundred: which is to confess the *novelty* of their most beloved doctrine; and consequently, to quit this antiquity, as in truth he plainly doth, in that book, where, being pressed with this argument, that no such power was claimed in the first times of the church, he answers, "That he hath not right conceptions of the church of Christ, who admits nothing but what he reads expressly written or done in the ancient church; for the church of later time hath power not only to explain, and declare, but constitute and command those things which belong to faith and manners."† Which is as much as to say, they need not

* C. Bellarm. Tract. de Potestate Summ. Pontif. p. 27. † Ib. cap. iii. p. 59.

trouble themselves about antiquity ; for they can make articles of faith now, which were not heard of in the beginning.

2. We have often also told them, by what steps images crept into the church. For they remained at first only in private houses, for ornament, or for commemoration, and not uncensured, there being above three hundred years past before they came into any church, and then not without opposition ; and for this end only, to be of an *historical use*, to remind people of things past ; which improved in three hundred years more to a *rhetorical use*, as we may call it, to stir up devotion in the people. For which purpose, Gregory the Great fancied they were profitable ; and though he by no means allowed them to be worshipped, yet he thought the people might look upon them, and worship God before them. And this looking upon them to help devotion was improved, in the time of the second Nicene council, into a downright worshipping of them, which would not pass in these western parts for good doctrine. And when at last (we know and have told them by what steps) this new worship advanced hither, and grew to a greater degree of religious respect than that Nicene council admitted, the most zealous defenders of it could not agree about it, nor do they know what to make of it to this day.

We could tell them of other things that are much newer, for it is but a little more than an hundred years, since unwritten traditions were decreed to be a part of the rule of faith, that is, of the word of God. But this is sufficient to show, that they vainly boast of antiquity ; which is only *ancient error*, and some of it not very ancient either. As for *ancient truth*, that is on our side, whom they most injuriously accuse of following novelties.

III. For the religion of the church of England, by law established, is the true primitive christianity ; in nothing new, unless it be in rejecting all that novelty which hath been brought into the church. But they are the cause of that ; for if they had not introduced new articles, we should not have had occasion for such articles of religion as condemn them ; which cannot indeed be old, because the doctrines they condemn are new, though the principle upon which we condemn them is as old as Christianity ; we esteeming all to be new, which was not from the beginning. For as for our positive doctrine, Polydore himself

hath given a true account of it, and makes it the reason why the sect called evangelic (as he speaks) increased so marvellously in a short time: "Because they affirmed that no law was to be received which appertains to the salvation of souls, but that which Christ or the apostles had given." *

And who dare say that this is a new religion, which is as old as Christ and his apostles? With whom whosoever agree, they are truly ancient churches, though of no longer standing than yesterday; as they that disagree with them are new, though they can run up their pedigree to the very apostles.

Thus Tertullian discourses; † with whose words somewhat contracted, I shall conclude: "As the doctrine of a church, when it is diverse from, or contrary to that of the apostles, shows it not to be an apostolical church, though it pretend to be founded by an apostle; so those churches that cannot produce any of the apostles, or apostolical men, for their founders (being much later and newly constituted), yet conspiring in the same faith, are nevertheless to be accounted apostolical churches, because of the *consanguinity of doctrine*."

* De Rerum Inventoribus, lib. vii. cap. 4.

† De Præscript, cap. 32.

THE
THIRD NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;

VIZ.

UNINTERRUPTED DURATION.*

BY BISHOP WILLIAMS.

How far the church of God is indebted to the industry of some learned men in the church of Rome, for the notes they give of a church, is not my business at present to examine: but those of the reformed religion must acknowledge themselves obliged to them for so frankly quitting those characters which are essential to every true church, and for taking up with such as either apparently belong not to their church, or belong to other churches as well as theirs: or, lastly, such as may be found in a false church as well as in a true. This might easily be proved against them, through the fifteen notes which are offered by them to the world: but I shall content myself to give an instance of it in the Note of Duration, which is made by them a necessary mark of the true church.

In prosecution of which, I shall consider,

I. *What is to be understood by the term duration.*

II. *How far duration may be said to be a note of the true church.*

III. *Whether the church of Rome hath a sufficient title to this character.*

* "Tertia Nota est duratio diuturna, nec unquam interrupta."—BELLAR.
lib. iv. cap. 4.

I. Duration, according to Bellarmine, is the continuance of a church throughout all times without interruption; and he adds, that the catholic church is so called, "not only because it always hath been, but also because it always will be." So that this duration doth include in it these three things:

1. The being of a church from the beginning.
2. The continuance of that church to the end.
3. The continuance of that church from the beginning to the end without interruption.

Let us now see how he applies it to the case. "It is evident," saith he "that our church hath continued from the beginning of the world hitherto: or, if we speak of the state of the New Testament, it hath endured from Christ to this year 1577," (the year when he wrote this.) But for all his beginning, it is evident there is no proof of what he affirms, and his assertion is very insufficient.

1. That he takes it for granted, that *his* church and the *christian* church are one and the same, and that there is no other true church but his. "It is evident *our* church," &c.

2. That he hath omitted two main branches of his duration, viz. That part of it which was to the *end of the world*, which is as necessary a part as that which was from the beginning: for if the church shall not continue to be as well as it hath been, it is not that church which *duration* is a note of.

Again, he hath passed by that other property of his duration, viz. That it hath been *without interruption*. For if the church of Rome was from the beginning, and hath continued, but not without interruption, it wants another property of duration; which always was, is, and always will be; and was, and will, and must be such, without interruption, according to him.

II. How far is duration a note of the true church? We grant that there shall always be a church of Christ upon the earth, and that the gates of hell shall never finally prevail against it, so as utterly to extinguish and destroy it: and this we firmly believe, because Christ hath *promised*, and undertaken it. But though this is a promise, and may support the church under the most doleful circumstances, yet it is no note by which the true church is to be found out and distinguished from the false; besides

that this promise doth belong to the existence of *a* church, and not to this or that church.

1. The nature of the thing will not permit that it should be a note; for a *promise* respects the time to come, but a *note* respects the time present. The thing promised may become a note, when it is actually fulfilled, but till it be fulfilled, it can no more be a note, than the future time is the present. For what a promise is to the future, that a note is to the present, and doth suppose the actual existence of a thing which it is the note of. And thus it is in the present case: God hath promised that he will be with his church, and preserve it to the end of the world, but as the period of that duration is not to be accomplished till the end of the world, the world must come to an end before we can know whether the church pretending to duration, be the true church. Suppose we for once allow Bellarmine's church to have continued (as he saith) for the space of 1577 years after our Saviour, and that it could be proved to a demonstration that it so long continued without interruption; yet the time past is no proof for the time to come; and if the world should continue 1577 years after his time, and the church nevertheless should expire before that term, the term of 1577 years past would no more answer this character of perpetual duration, than if it had endured but seven; for, as he saith, "Duration doth contain in it all times, and excludes none." And consequently if there was a time or case when that duration was interrupted (as I shall show it was) and a time in which that church shall cease to be before time itself shall cease (as it may for aught they can say against it) then either their church would not be the true church, or duration not be the note of the true church. For that duration including all times, the future time can be no more excluded than the time past or present; but since the future is incapable of proof, the true church cannot be proved by it, nor can duration be a note of it.

I grant indeed, that if duration be a necessary note of the true church, this may be a note by which those churches that once were, but are now utterly extinguished, may be concluded not parts of the true church; but this negative argument will neither be able to show which is the true church, when there are several pretend to the like duration; nor can be a note of the true church,

for the reason before given, viz. that, as it respects the future succession as well as the past, it can be no note till the time to come becomes present, and the whole period of it be accomplished.

2. That cannot be a note of the true church, which doth not inseparably belong to the church in all seasons and cases; for what is an essential character of a thing, belongs to that thing whenever and wherever it is: and if there be any season or case in which that note belongs not to it, that can be no true note of the thing. As for instance, the church in one house or city immediately after our Saviour's ascension, was as much a church from the first day it was so gathered, and had all the qualifications of a church, as it could have, had it been the church of Bellarmine, and been existent 1577 years. And yet that primitive church so constituted, wanted this note of duration; for it then but began to be. And if a person had been to inquire for the true church by this character and token, and had been taught that that could be no church which wanted it, he must have gone from the upper room to the Temple, and have been not a Christian, but a Jew. So that we must conclude, that either the church at that time had not all the marks necessarily belonging to the true church, and so indeed was no church; or else that duration is not an inseparable note of the true church. The former inference is good; because that which has not all the marks essentially belonging to the thing, cannot be the thing which they are the marks of; but if that apostolical church had all the marks essentially belonging to a true church, and yet wanted at that time this mark of duration, then duration cannot be an essential note of the true church, which was the second thing inferred.

3. That which is a note, must be proper to the thing which it is the note of, and not common to other things as well as to that, (so Bellarmine saith.) But now this note of duration is common to other things as well as to the church, to false churches as well as the true; and so cannot be an essential mark of the true church, or a note by which it is distinguished, and to be certainly known from the false. Suppose that a person that has imbibed this principle, is in quest of the true church, and had been living when Luther appeared, and had before him the Nestorians and Eutychians, the Armenians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians in the East, the

numerous church of Greece, &c. which pretend to a duration as good and sufficient as that of Rome, and the last of which is acknowledged by the bishop of Bitonto in the council of Trent,* to be “the mother of the Latin, and to which the Latin church owes what it hath;” how shall he be able to determine where he shall fix? For to say, (as Bellarmine doth†) that “they are heretics and schismatics,” and that the Greek church, for example, “was lawfully convicted of heresy and schism in three full councils,” ‡ (that is, councils of the church of Rome) will not make them not to have been, or that the note of duration belongs not to them. Either then they must disprove the duration of those churches, or discharge duration from being the distinguishing note of the true church.

Lastly, I may add, if duration be the standing note of the true church, then those could be no true churches which have not had that duration; and so they must un-church the seven churches of Asia, &c. which have now no existence, but are utterly extinguished. For if they had been true churches, they would have had duration, but having not duration, they could not, according to this doctrine, have ever been true churches. But I am not willing thus to leave the subject, and shall therefore,

III. Consider whether the church of Rome, after all its pretences to duration, and its establishment of this note of the true church, has a just and sufficient claim to it. When we would know whether a church has this note of duration belonging to it, we must consider what there is in a church that is capable of being tried by this character, and that is either as to place, persons, order, or doctrine; for by these it is that the church doth exist, and is made visible; and so the church that puts in a claim to duration, must be able to show some evidence for it from hence, as far as she admits them for instances of that duration she pleads for.

1. As to place. When we hear so much of the church of Rome, it is to be supposed that Rome is the principal seat of that church, as well as the pope of Rome is the head of it; but this they cannot pretend to duration in; for if we look backwards, we find not only

* Orat. Concil. Trid. † De Verbo Dei, lib. ii. cap. ult.

‡ De Not. cap. ix. § Dico 2do.

the city of Rome frequently sacked and destroyed, and wholly depopulated, as it was by Alaricus, Gensericus, and Totylas, but even deserted by the popes themselves, who, with their whole court, resided at Avignon for seventy years together,* as is acknowledged. If we look forward, all that Bellarmine dares to offer upon the point, that the chair of St. Peter shall not be separated from Rome, is, “that it is a pious and the most probable opinion.”† But if we consult others, they say positively, “That Rome shall depart from the faith, and shall be an habitation of devils, by reason of its wickedness and idolatry, and be the seat of antichrist.”‡

2. If we proceed to duration, as it respects persons, where shall we expect that to be entire and uninterrupted, if not in the popes? And yet if we may judge of popes as Bellarmine doth of a church,§ and that heresy doth nullify their elections and successions, as it doth the verity of a church, there is nothing more shattered. For if we look into the catalogue of them, we shall find Zepherynus a Montanist, Marcellinus sacrificing to idols, Liberius and Fælix, Arians, Anastasius a Nestorian, Honorius a Monothelite, John XXIII. denying a future life, with many others. Let us go on, and where shall we find more or greater schisms; one pope cursing another, and undoing what his predecessor had done; as was the case of Formosus, Romanus, Stephanus, and Sergius; often two popes together contesting for the chair (as it was for above forty years at once) and at one time three popes had such pretences to the papacy,|| that each had learned men for their patrons, and it could not be easily judged which of them was the true and lawful pope, as Bellarmine himself acknowledges. But this belongs to Note 5, of which more in its due place.

3. If we proceed to *order*, either in worship or discipline, the case is so notorious as to the several formularies used heretofore in that church, that it needs not to be insisted upon, and it is impossible for them to deny it.

4. Therefore I shall proceed to doctrine, which indeed is the

* Bellarm. de Pontif. lib. iv. cap. 4.

† Ibid. § At secundum.

‡ Vega Jesuita in Apoc. xviii. com. 7. § 4. Rhem. Annot. in Apoc. p. 17. 5.

§ De Not. lib. iv. cap. 8, § Dico secundo.

|| De Pontif. lib. iv. cap. 14, § Tricesimus septimus.

great character by which a church is to be discovered and tried.* And here that I may not either trench upon what has been said before concerning the variation of the church of Rome in this point from the Scriptures and antiquity, or prevent what may further be said upon Note 9, I shall compare the church of Rome with itself, and if I can therein prove that it is not now what it hath been in many main points,† it will follow that it has no pretence to this note of duration, for upon this point of alteration doth Bellarmine put the issue.

WHAT THE CHURCH OF ROME
DOETH HOLD.

1. The church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all churches, and to believe her so to be, is necessary to salvation. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 7. de Bapt. Can. 3. et Bulla Pii IV.)

2. The Pope of Rome is Christ's vicar, and hath the supreme power over the whole church, and without subjection to him as such, there is no salvation. (Concil. Trid. Sess. 6. Decret. de Reform. cap. 1. et Bulla Pii IV.)

3. The Apocryphal Books are canonical, and Tobit and Judith, &c. are as much the holy Scriptures as Genesis, &c. and whosoever rejects these as not canonical, is accursed. Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

WHAT THE CHURCH OF ROME
HATH HELD.

1. Before the time of the Nicene council, little regard was had to the church of Rome. (So Pope Pius, 2 Epist. p. 802,) and the church of Rome called others, *apostolical* and *sister* churches.

2. For one Bishop to set himself over the rest, and to have all the rest in subjection to him, is the pride of Lucifer, and the forerunner of anti-christ. (Pope Gregor. 1 Epist. 36.)

3. St. Jerom (who was a member of the Latin church) saith, that though Tobias, Judith and Maccabees, &c. were read, yet they were not received as canonical Scriptures, (Prolog. Prov.) And Pope Gregory I. quoting the Maccabees, excuses himself for

APOCRYPHA.

* Vide Notes I and II.

† De Not. lib. iv. cap. vi. § Quamvis autem.

producing a testimony out of a book not canonical. "We do not amiss," &c. (Moral. in Job, lib. xix. cap. 13.)

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION.

4. Scripture alone is not a rule of faith without tradition; and traditions are to be received with the like regard and veneration as the Scriptures. (Trid. Sess. 4.)

4. Gregory I. saith, that "All things which edify and instruct, are contained in the Scriptures;" and that, "from thence the teachers may presently teach whatsoever is needful." (In Ezek. Hom. lib. i. cap. 8. de Cur. Past. lib. ii. cap. 11.)

SCRIPTURE IN UNKNOWN TONGUES.

5. The Scriptures are not to be read in the vulgar tongue without license, because more prejudice than profit will redound from it. (Reg. Ind. Lib. Prohib. R. 4.)

5. Pope Gregory the Ninth, anno 1227, declared, "the not knowing the Scriptures by the testimony of truth itself, is the occasion of errors; and therefore it is expedient for all men to read or hear them." (Epist. ad Germ. Archiep. Const. apud M. Paris. Hen. III.)

MERIT.

6. Good works do truly deserve eternal life, and whosoever holds the contrary, is accursed. (Trid. Sess. 6. cap. 16, et can. 32.)

6. Gregory I. saith, that "the best of men will find no merit in their best actions:" and that "if he should attain to the highest virtue, he should obtain eternal life, not by merits, but by pardon." (Moral. lib. ix. cap. 11.) And elsewhere he saith, "I pray to be saved, not trusting to my merits, but

presuming to obtain that by thy mercy alone, which I hope not for by my merit." (In 1 Psal. pœnit.)

INDULGENCES.

7. By indulgences granted by the popes, and prelates of the church, persons are discharged from temporal punishments here, and in purgatory. (Trid. Sess. 25. Bull. Pii IV.)

7. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, in Henry the Eighth's time, saith, "The use of indulgences seems to be late in the church:" and upon the recital of this testimony, Polydore Virgil adds, "which being things of so great moment, you might expect them more certainly from the mouth of God." (De Invent. lib. viii. cap. 1.) Cardinal Cajetan saith, "There is no authority of Scripture, or ancient fathers, Greek or Latin, that brings them (indulgences) to our knowledge." (Opusc. 15. cap. 1.)

PURGATORY.

8. There is a purgatory after this life, where the souls of those that are not purged, nor have satisfied for their sins here, are there to be purged and to give satisfaction, unless their time be shortened by the prayers, alms, and masses of the living. (Trid. Sess. 25. and Sess. 22. can. 3.)

8. Bishop Fisher saith, "There is none, or very rare mention of purgatory in the ancient fathers." (Roff. contra Luther. Art. 18.) And Pope Gregory I. saith, "That at the time of death, either the good or evil spirit seizeth upon the soul, and keeps it for ever with it, without any change." (Moral. in Job. lib. viii. cap. 8. Vid. Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers.)

SERVICE IN AN UNKNOWN TONGUE.

9. It is required that divine service be performed in the Latin tongue, and whosoever saith it ought to be administered in a vulgar tongue, is accursed.

9. Bellarmine acknowledges, that, long after the apostles, both in the eastern and western churches, the people were wont to *answer* in divine offices. (De Verb. lib. ii. cap. 16. § Sed neque. Vid. Discourse concerning celebration of Divine Service in an unknown Tongue. p. 46, 47, 48.)

INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

10. In the church of Rome they pray to saints and angels as their intercessors. (Trid. Sess. 25. Catech. Rom. par. iv. cap. 9.)

10. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, saith, "Throughout the whole world, the church doth nothing by invocations of angels ——— but directeth her prayers to God, who hath made all, and calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And it seems not to have been an article of faith in the times of Lombard and Scotus (as it is now), the one of whom saith, "It is *not incredible* the saints do hear what we say." And the latter, "It is *probable* God hath revealed our prayers." (Lom. Sent. lib. iv. dist. 45. Scot. in 5 dist. q. 45.)

IMAGES.

11. Images are not only to be placed in temples, but also to be worshipped; as if the persons represented thereby were

11. Pope Gregory I. after he hath allowed images in temples, for information of the ignorant, doth professedly for-

present. (Trid. Sess. 25. Catech. Rom. par. iv. chap. 6. n. 4.)

bid the worship of them. (Lib. vii. Epist. 109. ad Serenum, et Reg. Epist. lib. ix. Ep. 9. &c.

SACRAMENTS.

12. There are seven ^rsacraments, truly and properly so; and whosoever saith there are more or fewer instituted by Christ, is accursed. (Trid. Sess. 7. can. 1.)

12. Cassander, a member of the church of Rome, saith, "We shall not likely find any before Pet. Lombard (who lived about 1130) that did define the number of the sacraments." (Art. 13. § de Num. Sacr.) And particularly Alexander Hales, the famous schoolman, saith, "That confirmation was ordained to be a sacrament by the Meldensian council." (Par. iv. q. 9. m. 1.)

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

13. Bread and wine, after consecration, are turned into the substance of Christ's body and blood, without changing the species. (Conc. Trid.)

13. Pope Gelasius saith, that "in the sacrament, the substance or nature of bread ceaseth not, or perisheth not." (Gelas. cont. Eutych.)

Gregory I. saith, "That our bodies as well as our souls are nourished by the eucharist." (Sacram. 16. Kal. Mar. and in 6 Psal. pœnit.)

COMMUNION IN ONE KIND.

14. The people are forbidden to receive the sacrament in both kinds. (Trid. Sess. 21. cap. 1.)

14. Pope Gelasius declares, "Either let them receive the whole sacrament, or let them be driven from the whole; for the dividing of one and the same sacrament, cannot be done without great sacrilege." (De Consecr. dist. 2. comperimus.)

And Pope Gregory I. affirms it to be the constant practice for the people to receive it in both kinds. (Sacram. in quadrag. Tr. 3. Vid. Vindication of the Answer to some Papers.)

SOLITARY MASSES.

15. Solitary masses, wherein the priest communicates alone, are approved and commended; and whosoever saith they are unlawful, and to be abrogated, is accursed. (Trid. Sess. 22. can. 8.)

Anacletus, Bishop of Rome, did decree, that "all present should communicate, or else should be turned out of the church; for so the apostles did order, and the holy church of Rome observeth." Par. iii. dist. 1. Episcop. et 2. peracta.)

Gregory I. forbids the priest to celebrate the eucharist alone. (Greg. lib. Capitul. cap. 7. apud Cassand. Liturg. c. 33.)

AURICULAR CONFESSION.

16. Without particular confession of sins to a priest, there is neither forgiveness nor salvation to be obtained. (Trid. Sess. 14. c. 5. can. 6, 7.)

16. This was neither in the time of Pope Gelasius, nor Pope Gregory I. (Vid. Vindication of the Answer.)

EXTREME UNCTION.

17. Extreme unction is a sacrament, and to be administered when persons are in imminent danger; and last of all to be applied. (Trid. Sess. 14. c. 13.)

17. In Gregory the First's time, it was used in order to recovery, and the eucharist was to be given after it. (Sacram. p. 253. Vid. Vindication of the Answer.)

PRIEST'S MARRIAGE.

18. Those that are in orders must not marry, and those that

18. To marry was a privilege belonging to the clergy as well

are married must not be admitted	as others. (So Cassander con-
to orders. (Conc. Later. 1. can.	sult. Art. 23. et Polyd. Virg.
21. et Later. 2. can. 6.)	Invent. l. v. c. 4.)

By this parallel, thus far drawn betwixt the ancient and present doctrine of the church of Rome, we may be able to judge of the *immutability* and *duration* of the church ; which can no more be consistent with it, than one part of a contradiction can be reconciled to another ; or than infallibility can be consistent with the having actually erred. To find fallible churches mistaken, and at some times to vary from themselves, is consistent with their nature, and for all which (if the errors are not fundamental) they are churches still ; but to find errors and contradictions in an infallible church, is to confound the nature of things, to give the infallible church no advantage over the fallible, and to expose the persons that betake themselves to that shelter, to all the disquietudes, uncertainties, and disappointments of ignorance and error. For what is the usual reason given for forsaking other churches, but because they are fallible ? What is the reason why they go over to the church of Rome, but because she is (as they are made to believe) infallible ? But if with her infallibility she has mistaken ; if with her certainty she contradicts herself ; if she was one thing in one age, and another in another ; then there is the same reason to quit the church of Rome, as there was to embrace it ; and such persons must either be contented with a church that is fallible, or be of none.

THE
FOURTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
AMPLITUDE,
OR,
MULTITUDE AND VARIETY OF BELIEVERS.*

- BY BISHOP FOWLER.

WE could very willingly appeal to our adversaries themselves, were they unconcerned, whether a plainer proof can be given of a baffled cause in a controversy relating to any point of revealed religion, than for the assertors of it to decline maintaining it by those books, which alone can acquaint us with divine revelations. But it is notorious, that the Romanists are highly chargeable upon this account, in their endeavours to persuade the world, that theirs is the only true church. They need not be told, that we are indebted to the holy Scriptures for our having any notion of such a thing as a church, and they and we are agreed, that *that* only is the true christian church, which professeth the true christian faith; and therefore how is it possible they should not be aware, that the best way to be satisfied, whether those who challenge to themselves the title of the true and catholic church, have it really belonging to them, is, to examine their faith by the holy Scriptures? Which it is hard to imagine they can think to be so

* “Quarta Nota est amplitudo, sive multitudo et varietas credentium.”—
BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 7.

imperfect a rule of faith, as to believe it a justifiable thing to be so averse to this method, as we have ever found they are. This we of the reformation have always stuck to, and we are desirous of nothing more, than that it may be tried by the faith we profess, whether we are found members of the catholic church, and whether the soundness of our faith may be tried by the Scriptures.

But instead of taking this course, those of the Roman communion have invented and do insist on a collection of notes and characters of the church, which are either not to be met with, or are far from being plainly delivered in Scripture. Had this been *our* practice, I appeal to their own consciences, whether they could have imputed it to a better cause, than our being conscious to ourselves of the inconsistency of our faith with the doctrine of Scripture, and our not daring to have it brought to this touchstone.

Of this sort of notes Cardinal Bellarmine hath given us no fewer than fifteen, among which he could afford no place to this note of ours, *i. e.* harmony with the Scriptures; though it is as evident as the light, that this one alone would have signified much more to his purpose, than all that long bead-roll put together.

The design of this discourse, is to examine his fourth note, viz. *Amplitudo, sive Multitudo et Varietas Credientium*: Amplitude, or Multitude and Variety of Believers. And how far he makes it to extend, his next words inform us, viz. "*Ecclesia enim verè catholica, non solum debet amplecti omnia tempora, sed etiam omnia loca, omnes nationes, omnia hominum genera.*" *i. e.* The truly catholic church ought not only to comprehend all ages, but also all places, all nations, and all sorts of men. And,

First, He endeavours to prove this to be a true note.

Secondly, To make it to belong to the church of Rome, and to her alone.

Thirdly, To persuade us that those particularly who call themselves the Reformed Churches, can lay no claim to it.

And it shall be my business,

I. To show that this *cannot* be a note of the true church. And,

II. Supposing it to be so, that the church of Rome will however gain nothing by it, as to her pretension; nor the reformed churches lose any thing: nay, on the contrary, that it will quite overthrow her pretension of being the whole catholic

church, and do the reformed churches as great service, as do her prejudice.

I. I will briefly show, "That this cannot be a note of the true church." By a *note* is understood a *distinguishing character*; but this is such a character of the true church, as no one could *less* distinguish it by: and that, whether we consider the members thereof under either the notion of a great multitude, or a great multitude of *believers*.

Considering them under the notion of a great *multitude*, the church, which is Christ's kingdom, is far from being distinguishable, as such, from the kingdom of Satan, which was always incomparably more numerous; or, from *that part* of it which consisteth of idolatrous *pagans*. What Romanist can boast of his church, in reference to this note, as Demetrius the silversmith did of his Diana, when he said, that all Asia and the world worshipped her? Nor can the church of Christ, by the number of its members, be distinguished from the worshippers of that impostor Mahomet; which the sons of the Roman church must especially grant to be far exceeding the members of Christ's true church in number, since they make *themselves* the *only* catholics.

Again, considering them under the notion of "a great multitude of believers," there was an age in which the orthodox Christians could not be distinguished from heretics, by the greatness of their number (whom the Romanists will not admit to be members of the church in any sense), for in the reign of Arianism, ingemuit orbis, et mirabatur, &c. "The world lamented and wondered, to find itself turned Arian," saith St. Jerome. And it became a proverb, "Athanasius against the whole world, and the whole world against Athanasius." And lastly, the church of Christ is not to be *thus* distinguished from the kingdom of antichrist. I wish our adversaries could impartially consider, *whose* note* that of "having power given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," is most likely to be: and *who* it is that is described by "sitting, as upon seven hills, upon so many waters:"† which waters are "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."‡

These things considered, nothing is more apparent, than that

* Rev. xiii. 7.

† Chap. xvii. 1.

‡ Ver. 15.

the true church is neither to be distinguished from other bodies of men, nor of professors of Christianity, by the largeness of its extent, or the numerousness of its members ; and therefore that a true note thereof cannot result from these. And besides, a true note of the church must be essential to it, must belong thereto *as* the true church, and therefore is inseparable from it. But how could amplitude or multitude be ascribed to the true church in the time of our Saviour, when he called it *a little flock*, and said, “ Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it,” &c.

But Bellarmine pretends to fetch this note of his out of the *Bible*, and not to be indebted only to Vincentius Lirinensis for it, whom he first cites in favour of it; though little to his purpose, as will be seen anon. The texts he produces are four; two in the Old Testament, and two in the New. Those in the Old Testament are, Psal. ii. 8, where God the Father promiseth his Son, “ That he will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” And Psal. lxxii. 8, where it is prophesied, that Christ “ shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Those in the New Testament are, Luke xxiv. 47, where our Lord declareth, that “ repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” And Acts i. 8, where he tells his apostles, that “ they shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon them, and they shall be witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.” And it cannot be doubted but that these texts do prove, that the members of Christ’s church shall be a very vast multitude, and that its amplitude should even extend over all the world. But nevertheless,

1. It doth not from hence follow, that the conjunction of amplitude and multitude doth make a note, or distinguishing character of Christ’s true church. It is *one* thing to say, it *belongs* thereto as an *attribute*, and *another*, that it is *appropriated* to it as a *note*. That may be even essential to a thing, which yet is not a note of distinction, or peculiar property, whereby it may be known from all other things. The power of sensation is essential to a man,

yet for all that, he is not distinguishable thereby from a beast. But it is evident from what hath been discoursed, that the true church is not to be distinguished from the kingdom of Satan, nor of antichrist, nor from *erroneous sects*, by amplitude and multitude: and that these together, or apart, are not so much as essential to the church of Christ; since there was a time when, as hath been said, it was without them both.

2. This is so far from being a note of the church, that it is no more than a variable state and condition thereof; since it hath had, from time to time, its ebbs and flows, and hath had sometimes larger, and at other times straiter and narrower bounds. This the Cardinal was aware of, and therefore, among other things which he would have to be observed for the right understanding of this his note, he saith, that “although the church ought not necessarily to be in all places at the same time, yet now it ought necessarily to be, or to have been, in the greater part of the world: for it is acknowledged by all, even the heretics themselves (meaning the Protestants), that the church is now in her old age, and therefore must be past growing.” By the way, though all his heretics, no doubt, do believe that the church hath daily grown older and older, yet I know not how many he hath found asserting, that she is now arrived at old age. But it will by no means be granted him, that the church is yet grown so old, as to be past growing, or to have a period put to its time of increasing. And therefore I add,

3. That we have great assurance, that the church hitherto hath not deserved to be compared with what it shall be before the end of the world, both in respect of its amplitude, and the number of believers. For there are very many plain prophecies, from whence this may certainly be concluded; which all who, without prejudice, consider them, must needs be satisfied have not hitherto been accomplished: namely, those which have reference to the “calling of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and the most plentiful effusion of the Spirit; and perfect rest from persecution; and universal peace,” with the most wonderful outward prosperity of the church. There are, I say, abundance of the plainest predictions and prophecies of this nature, which the church hath not as yet experienced the performance of; and they

are expressed in such words, as that it may reasonably be believed, that those great things which God hath heretofore done for his church, either Jewish or Christian, are no better than types and emblems of what he intends to do, in his appointed time. Among those predictions and promises, the reader must consult these following, which are but a few in comparison of the whole number, viz. in the Old Testament, Psal. xxii. 27—31. Isa. ii. 1—6; chap. xi. throughout. Jer. xxxii. 37—43; chap. xxxiii. 7 to the end. Dan. vii. 13, 14. And in the New Testament, Matt. xxiv. 14. Rom. xi. 12, and ver. 25—33. 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. Rev. xx. 1—7. Though the fulfilling of these scriptures hath been deferred for so many ages, yet “He is faithful that hath promised” so glorious an increase of his church, with the other unspeakable blessings now mentioned, and will fulfil them when the time is come, which his infinite wisdom knows to be the fittest for that purpose. And thus much may suffice to be said, in reference to the Cardinal’s proving this note by Scripture.

As to those words, in the next place, of Vincentius Lirinensis, in his *Commonitorium*, which he produces for the confirming thereof, viz. “*Eos propriè esse catholicos, qui tenent id quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est:*” Those are properly catholics, who hold that which hath been always, every where, and by all believed: I answer,

1. That Vincentius doth not pretend to give us, in these words, a note of the catholic church, but of *such* a Christian. This is evident at first sight: and so is this,

2. Whereas he makes it the character of a true catholic, to hold what hath been believed, “*semper, ubique, et ab omnibus,*” it cannot be hence inferred, that he believed amplitude, or a multitude of believers, to be so much as an attribute of the catholic church; and therefore much less a note.

3. If these words lay down a true note of a catholic Christian, then no body of Christians can be more evidently proved to be no true catholics, than those of the Roman communion may; in all those articles of faith which are peculiar to themselves. For, as to points of mere belief, how much more than the Apostles’ Creed can they show us to have been received, always, every where, and by all Christians? But as for that large addition of Tridentine

articles, annexed to that creed by Pope Pius IV., no unbiassed person can believe, they have ever done any thing like proving, that any of them have been received *always*, and much less *every where*, and *by all those* whom they themselves own for catholic Christians.

4. By this note of a catholic church, no society of Christians can bid so fair for catholicism, as the reformed churches, but especially the church of England; whose avowed principle it is, "to receive nothing as an article of faith, but what is contained in the holy Scriptures, or may be proved thereby."* Nor doth she embrace any one doctrine as an article of faith, but what is clearly expressed in those books, of whose canonicalness there never was the least dispute in the primitive church.

II. I proceed to show, that if we should acknowledge this to be a true note of the catholic church; instead of enabling the church of Rome to make good her pretensions of so being, it will destroy it: and instead of doing disservice to the reformed churches, it will do them excellent service, and be a certain argument of their being true parts of the catholic church. And,

I will show that it will not at all advantage the church of Rome, as to that her pretension, and therefore can do us no prejudice. The Cardinal proves,

1. "That his church began to fructify throughout the world in the days of the apostles" from these words of St. Paul (Col. i. 6,) "The truth of the gospel is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you," &c. But what is this to *his* church? Is the gospel's bringing forth fruit in all the world the same thing with the church of *Rome's* so doing?

2. He adds the authority of several fathers for this church being spread in their time all over the then known world, but gives us none of their sayings except St. Prosper's. The first father he cites is St. Irenæus, in the third chapter of his book.† But the father here only saith, "That this faith" (which he sums up immediately before, and is but the chief part of the Apostles' Creed) "the church disseminated throughout the world diligently preserves, as if it were confined but to one house." But how doth this concern the church of Rome? which is not once mentioned with others here particularly named; except we could be

* Article 6.

† Edit. Paris, p. 53.

made to believe, that wheresoever the word *church* is found, *that church* is still to be understood. Next he cites Tertullian* *adversus Judæos*, and having searched that book, I imagine these, or none other, are the words he means, viz. "Those words of David are to be understood of the apostles, 'their sound is gone forth in all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world : ' for in whom have all nations believed, but in Christ, who is now come? The Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and those that inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, Africa, and beyond Cyrene, the Romans and Jews now in Jerusalem, and other nations; as now of the Getuli and Moors, all Spain, divers countries of the Gauls, and those of the Britains, which the Romans could never conquer, are subject to Christ," &c. But I again ask, What is all this to the church of Rome, more than to any other particular church belonging to any one of the many nations, of which that of the Romans is one, and two whole quarters of the world, here mentioned? His third father is St. Cyprian, in his book *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*.† But here there is nothing he could fancy to be for his purpose, except these words: "The church is one, which by its fruitfulness is extended into a multitude; as there are many rays of the sun, and but one light, &c., so the church of our Lord, which being filled with light, sends forth her beams through the whole world, is but one light, which is diffused every where." But though this be said of the catholic church, is there here the least intimation that the church of Rome is this catholic church? After St. Cyprian follow several of the later fathers, their books being only directed to. But the narrow room I am confined to will not permit me to examine them; nor need we look any farther to be satisfied, how this greatest man of the Roman church condescended to the most shameful impertinence, in citing Scripture and fathers for doing her service. But we must not overlook St. Prosper's verses, in his book, *De Ingratis*, viz.

"Sedes Roma Petri, quæ pastoralis honoris
Facta caput mundo, quicquid non possidet armis,
Religione tenet."

"Rome, the seat of Peter, being made the head of pastoral honour in the world, whatsoever country she possesseth not by arms, she holds by her religion."

* Edit. Rig. p. 189.

† Edit. Oxon. p. 108.

But, considering how early this father, Prosper, lived, viz. about the beginning of the fifth century, he could mean no more than this, that the church of Rome, the most honourable of all other (by means of that city's being the ancient seat of the emperors) keeps still possession of those places by the religion they received from her, over which she hath lost her old dominion. And what is this but another plain instance of most idle quoting of ancient authors? not to reflect upon fetching arguments from poetical flourishes.

But not to stand to consider how ample the Roman church was in the times of those fathers, nothing is more evident than that that part of Christendom she took up, was but a small spot of ground compared with the space those churches filled; which, though they held communion with her, were *distinct* churches from her, and owned no subjection to her. And it was about, or above, an hundred years after the youngest of those fathers that the pope was invested by that execrable wretch Phocas (a blessed title in the mean time) with the primacy over all churches. And Gregory the Great, who died in the beginning of the sixth century, not only sharply inveighed against John, patriarch of Constantinople, and his successor Cyriacus, for assuming to themselves the title of universal bishops (though there was no appearance of their designing any thing more thereby than an addition of honour, not of power, to that patriarchate) but also called those who should affect such a haughty title, the “forerunners of antichrist.”* And as the fact of these bishops taking this title was a demonstration that they acknowledged not the least subjection to the bishops of Rome; so Pope Gregory calling those bishops who should do so, without exception, “forerunners of antichrist,” is as plain a proof that the bishops of Rome to *his* time, did not look on themselves as having a primacy over all churches. And it is manifest, that in the time of the council of Nice, the church of Rome was not thought to include the catholic church, or to be any more than one part thereof: this, I say, is manifest from the sixth canon of that council, viz. “Let the ancient customs be preserved, for the bishop of Alexandria to have jurisdiction over Egypt, Libya, and

* Greg. Epist. 37 et 70. lib. xi. et Ep. 30. lib. iv.

Pentapolis ; because the bishop of Rome hath a like custom," &c. Which is as much as to say, that the bishop of Alexandria had then the same uncontrollable power in his large jurisdiction that the bishop of Rome had in his. And therefore that council knew nothing of this bishop's having any power over the *Alexandrian*, and much less over the whole *catholic* church. Nor is any thing more certain, than that the mere superiority of *honour*, which the Roman church had, was founded on no divine right, but only on *that city's being the seat of the empire*. For, as the second general council, viz. that of Constantinople, decreed in its third canon, that the bishop of Constantinople should have the privilege of honour *next* to the bishop of Rome, upon the account of its being the imperial city, and therefore called *New Rome* : so in the 28th canon of the fourth general council, viz. that of Chalcedon, it was ordained, that for the same reason, the bishop of Constantinople should have *equal* privileges with the bishop of *Rome*. So that it is a plain case, that whosoever shall undertake to prove from any sayings of the ancients, for the first five hundred years at least, that the church of *Rome* and the *catholic* church were reputed to be the same, and consequently, that whatsoever they said of the amplitude of *this*, is to be understood of *that* church, must necessarily make as sad work of it, as Bellarmine hath here done. And therefore it is apparent too, that no service can be done to the church of Rome by this note, as to her pretension of being the true catholic church : from whence it will likewise follow, that no prejudice can from thence accrue to the reformed churches. But this is not all : for,

This note, were it a true one, would be destructive to that her pretence, and do the reformed churches great service, viz. in demonstrating them to be true parts of the catholic church. This also may be concluded from what hath been said, but it will be made more evident by the following considerations.

1. If the church of Rome had as ample a spread over the world, for some of the first ages, as Bellarmine contends for, this would far more redound to the advantage of our churches of the reformation, (were amplitude a distinguishing property of the church) than to the advantage of the present church of Rome, because that church *then* was more *ours*, than *now* it is the *Romanists*. For

there can scarcely be a greater disagreement in doctrine or worship between any two christian churches, than there hath for a long time been between the same church as she was then, and is now. But the agreement is as great between the ancient church of Rome and our churches, and especially between her and the church of England. This our adversaries could not but see, would they impartially compare the doctrine and worship of each together. And the only quarrel they have with us, is, that we will not admit more into *our* creed than the Christians of the first ages did into *theirs*; and that we worship God only by the mediation alone of Jesus Christ, as *they* did: that *our* laity partake of the communion in both kinds, as *theirs* did. And, in short, that we believe the holy Scriptures to be a complete rule of faith, as it was every where believed to be by the primitive catholics; and that we will not receive into our worship the Roman novelties; those things which were utterly unknown to both the Roman and all other churches in *those* ages.

Now, whereas the Cardinal would have it observed, for the better explaining the meaning of this note, that “if one province alone should retain the true faith, it might properly be called the catholic church, so long as its faith is one and the same, with that which at one time or other had prevailed in the whole world:” We desire no greater advantage to our church, and all other in communion with her; since *these* reformed churches, and *those* which in the primitive times were extended all over the then known parts of the world, are agreed in much more than in all the fundamental points of faith.

2. It hath been estimated upon computation that the churches subject to the Roman see, exceed not much the reformed churches in amplitude or multitude of members:* especially since Italy, Spain, and Portugal are detained in the Romish religion, not by choice or judgment, but by ignorance and the tyranny of the inquisition. But who can be ignorant that the church of Rome bears not the least proportion upon those accounts with these churches, considered in conjunction with that part of Christendom which agreeth with them, as in all the main points of Christianity, in refusing subjection to that church; and in most of those

* See the Preface to Brerewood's Inquiries.

doctrines and practices which we condemn in her as contrary to holy Scripture, or as not founded thereon (and yet made necessary to salvation by *her*) and not taught by the primitive church? So that should all the churches which deny that of Rome to have any authority over them, deal with *her* as she hath dealt with *them*, and pronounce her to have nothing more left her than the mere name of a church; this her note would be an unanswerable objection *against* her being a true church, as well as *the* true church; on supposition that (as she holds) of two parties of Christians rejecting communion with, and unchurching each other, but one of them can be a true church. That so large a part of Christendom, I say, agrees with the reformed churches in all the grand articles of faith, and in the chief of those wherein they are at variance with the church of Rome, as makes the whole an incomparably greater body of believers than all those together who own that church for their mother, is so notorious, that it is impossible our adversaries should dispute it.

The Cardinal indeed tells us, on this note, "That besides all Italy and Spain, and almost all France, which the church of Rome possesseth; and besides Germany, England, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Greece, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, in which many catholics are found; even in the new world (*viz.* America) she hath churches without the mixture of heretics." And we can reply, that besides England, Scotland, and Ireland, in which Protestancy is the national religion; and in the two former of which, the number of Papists is very inconsiderable: and besides Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the United Provinces, in all which it is also the national religion: and besides Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Transylvania, in which are abundance of Protestant churches (as there were lately in the kingdom of France too, and it will never be forgot by what methods they have been extirpated); besides all those countries, I say, the Protestants have also their churches in the new world, no less without the mixture of heretics: and these consist of other kind of believers than those the Romanists boast of in that quarter. For, whereas Surius and others have told prodigious stories of incredible numbers of them, that have been baptized by particular priests; Acosta, though a Jesuit, acknowledgeth, that "many of them were driven to baptism as

beasts to the water.”* And Oviedo saith of Cuba, that “There was scarcely any one, or but extremely few, that willingly became Christians.”† And both he and Benzo,‡ who were long conversant in those parts, say of Cuba and New Spain, that “They had scarcely any thing belonging to Christianity, besides the bare name of Christians. That they only minded the name they received in baptism, and not long after forgot that too.” And the former of these makes this no matter of wonder, since he declares their converters to be no better Christians than these converts : and excellently expostulates with them about the horrible wickedness of their lives ; telling them that would they give the poor Indians good examples, this method would signify much more towards the making of them good Christians, than that course they took with them. And the old Monsieur Arnaud, in an assembly at Paris, scoffed at the Jesuits for the conversion of the Indians ; calling it a brave *warlike conversion*, “*conversionem bellam et bellicosam* ;” and telling them, that they had converted “*gladium oris in os gladii*,” “the sword of the mouth, into the mouth of the sword.”

And whereas the Cardinal, in the words following those last cited, makes this flourish, that “Rome hath churches in all the four parts of the world ; to the East in the Indies, to the West in America, to the North in Japan, to the South in Brazil, and the uttermost part in Africa :” If his meaning was more than this, that there is no country in all those parts, but hath Romanists in it, it was (to say no worse) a mere flourish : if he meant no more than so, we may dare to affirm as much concerning Protestants. But it matters not much whether we can or not, since there are infinite numbers of Christians, who, though they bear not the name of Protestants, yet agree with them in not being Papists, and, as was said, in all the great points of the christian religion, whether of faith or practice.

To pass by the Christians under the patriarch of Mozall, of whom Postellus saith, “Though they are but few in comparison of what they have been, yet they are many more than us Latins.”§ To say nothing neither of the Armenian Christians, falsely called

* De Procur. Ind. Sal. lib. vi. cap. 3.

† Ovied. Hist. Ind. Occid. lib. xvii. cap. 4.

‡ Benzo, Hist. Nov. Orb. lib. ii. cap. 19.

§ Cosmog. p. 69.

Nestorians (whose catholic, as they call their patriarch, "Otho Frisingensis," reports to have under his obedience above a thousand bishops,* from the report of his legates sent to Rome), both which vast bodies of Christians acknowledge no subjection to the see of Rome : I say, to pass by these, we need not instance any besides the Greek church, for the foresaid purpose ; which hath had an uninterrupted succession of bishops from the apostles, and is of greater antiquity than the church of Rome, and which hath produced *more fathers than that church*. This church is divided into many nations, as the Hiberians, the people of Colchis (now Mongrelia), the Arabians, Chaldeans, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Muscovites, Bulgarians, Sclavonians, Albanians, Caramanians, Wallachians, Moldavians, Grecians, &c. And we may guess what a huge disproportion there is in largeness between all the Greek churches, and those subject to the church of Rome, by this ; the countries in Europe and Asia, which the Muscovites alone inhabit, are computed to be near of as great an extent as all Europe besides.

The Greek church hath *four ancient patriarchs*, the Constantinopolitan, the Alexandrian, the Antiochian, and the patriarch of Jerusalem. And since the patriarchate of Constantinople hath been under the Turkish tyranny, there hath been a fifth patriarch, viz. of Moscow. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, and since of Constantinople, Bellarmine's contemporary, saith of the Greek church, dispersed through the foresaid nations,† that "they are steadfast in the faith of Christ : that no innovation in matters of faith is found among them ; and but only some difference in ceremonies." He acknowledgeth that some of those nations are not free from superstition ; but adds, that "without detriment of the faith it (superstition) is connived at, because it cannot be remedied, in regard of many difficulties. But in those things which belong to the essence of faith, 'perseverantes sunt et permanentes,' they are fixed and unalterable." He also writes, that "whereas the oriental churches seem to be reproached for their ignorance ; philosophy and other sorts of learning being gone from thence into other parts, since they have been oppressed with many miseries,

* See Brerewood's *Inquiries*, p. 211, last edition.

† Ep. 2. ad Vytenbogard. inter Ep. præst. Vir. p. 399, in 8vo.

by reason of the tyranny of the Turk, yet they reap no small advantage hereby ; because by this means they are unacquainted with those pestiferous questions, which at this time infect men's ears ; and with the new monstrous portentous doctrines."* And it is plain what doctrines he chiefly meant. He adds, that " they are content with 'incompta fides,' a plain undrest faith, taught them by the apostles and their ancestors, and herein they persevere even unto blood: that they keep 'Ορθοδοξίαν integram, the true faith entirely: that they see themselves bereft of all their substance, their children snatched from their embraces ; and are continually brought into the greatest tribulations, yet it is not grievous to them to suffer these things for the faith of Christ,"† &c.

So that the motto which Minutius Felix made for the primitive Christians, " Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus ;" great things are not so much talked, as lived by us ; this great prelate (whose fidelity in this account is unquestionable, he being a person of as famed piety as learning) doth assure us is deserved by these Greek Christians. But for all this, they must all be doomed to hell torments, as effectually as the church of Rome's sentence can do it, because they will not truckle under her, and be made subject to a double bondage.

And thus have I sufficiently showed, that it would be for the interest of the reformed churches, that Cardinal Bellarmine's Fourth Note of the Church were as true as we have proved it false : and that it would then overthrow, instead of establishing, the church of Rome's marvellous pretence of being " the true, or catholic church."

* Ep. 1. ad eundem. *ibid.* p. 369.

† See the Rev. Dean Stillingfleet's Defence of the Greek Church from the Romanists' Charge of Heresy, in his learned Vindication of Archbishop Laud.

THE
FIFTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
THE SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS.*

BY DR. THORPE.

THE disputers of the Roman communion boasting in nothing so much as in the venerable name of the catholic church, using all means to appropriate it to themselves exclusively; and it being the most popular argument they flee to, and with which they commonly begin and end all debates, we are concerned faithfully and plainly to examine their title or claim to so honourable a denomination, and the many vast privileges founded thereupon.

Among the Notes of the Church in Bellarmine (their chief champion) the fifth in order, and not the least plausible in all his number, is this of the succession of bishops, the subject of this short essay; in which three inquiries may be made.

I. How far this note may be necessary to any church.

II. How this may be granted to the Roman church.

III. How insufficient a proof it affords to them of any great advantage by it.

Inquiry I. Concession 1. In answer to the former, it may, I presume, be generally yielded, that to the complete constitution

* "Quinta nota est successio episcoporum in Romana ecclesia ab apostolis deducta usque ad nos."—BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. viii.

of the church, it will be always needful that there be in it *true and lawful pastors*, not only for the rightful administration of God's word and sacraments, but also for the due and orderly government thereof, and the dispensation of wholesome discipline to the flock committed to their charge; requiring all tender care, vigilant inspection, and indulgent provision for them; and all cheerful and humble submission, and ready subjection from these: requisites to any society, confirmed by many precepts and examples in Scripture.

Concession 2. We yield this pastoral power originally to be from Christ, the head of his church, the chief bishop and pastor of his flock, and to be by him immediately conveyed to the apostles, and from them derived by imposition of hands, or ordination, to their successors in the several churches which they planted, and so to be continued by a regular succession to the end of the world; as may be proved by the several directions in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and examples in the Acts of the Apostles, and the following practice of the church in all ages, and places, of which we have any records extant. "No man taketh this honour to himself."*

Concession 3. We grant further, that according to the best evidence of scripture rule or example, and the constant practice of Christ's church, the *power of ordination* is entrusted to the bishops, the chief governors thereof, and ordinary successors of the apostles to the end of the world. And we as readily embrace the canonical provisions of the constitutions given under the name of the apostles by St. Clement, or the decree of the ever-renowned first council of Nice, that "every bishop be ordained by three bishops, or two at the least," &c.

All which is most agreeable to the doctrine and practice of the church of England. Such is our government and succession, not at all interrupted in the reformation, whatever difficulties it struggled with elsewhere: a signal happiness, for which we have reason ever to bless God, and not peevishly to endeavour, by wilful and schismatical separations, to deprive ourselves of that privilege, which may be the chief eye-sore to our adversaries, and thereby

* Heb. v. 4.

to furnish them with new and better arguments than ever yet they found against us. If their succession be good, so is ours, (for sure it is not tied to one place,) whether we derive it through them by Augustin the monk, though ordained in France, or from, or by the British bishops, who had been here several ages before his coming, and by as regular a succession from apostolical times, without any dependence, as they profess, or as far as we can find, on the see or bishop of Rome.

Observation 1. However it may be noted, that though this *succession of bishops* be necessary to the complete constitution of the church ; yet it may well be *doubted whether it is indispensable to the very being of it*, so as to unchurch every place that wants these. For baptism alone gives us admission into the church, and a title to the heavenly inheritance upon the performance of our part of the covenant. And although this obliges all Christians to endeavour to provide themselves with lawful pastors for their constant supply in all the means of grace, and so to seek them abroad, as far as they can, where they have them not at home ; yet, in a supposed case, where these may not be had, or but had upon conditions out of their power to yield ; or, in the mean time, they who suppose baptism to be valid, though in case of necessity administered by any Christian, nay, according to their catechism, by Jew, infidel, or heretic, if he but intend to do what the church designs hereby ; must not presently unchurch any place, or exclude all persons that want this full provision of all needful helps and advantages, though some of most immediate divine institution. What allowances God may make for great necessities, or almost invincible difficulties and prejudices, where men are not wilfully and obstinately wanting to themselves, we cannot or must not determine.

Observation 2. It is not necessary that every church which may firmly presume upon this lawful and orderly succession, even from the apostles, should be able to *produce the records of its conveyance through every age*, and in every single person by whom it hath passed. Few churches of long continuance have been so happy, as to preserve authentic registers of all their transactions from their first plantation ; which must not weaken their authority, or make doubtful the effect of their ministrations, where no

positive evidence is brought to the contrary. The ancients content themselves in delivering down to us the succession of bishops in the *greater* sees and mother-cities, not of Rome only, but of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and others, (though Bellarmine* insinuates the contrary here) as is most apparent in Eusebius, &c. The eminence of their place and power, the frequent resort of other neighbouring churches to them, from whom they were generally derived, or as dependent on their cities in *civil* administrations, which the *ecclesiastical* usually followed; these and such like reasons made them more noticed by all about them, and their successions more carefully recorded in church-writers: which possibly might have then been done in many of the lesser churches, had they judged it necessary, when within a very few centuries, and not through very many persons, the oldest might have been traced to its first original. But very different is the case now, after so many changes of nations and cities, by the violence of war, and other commotions, for more than 1600 years since the first dispersion of the church.

Observation 3. Some irregularities and uncanonical proceedings in times of great schisms, or public disturbances, have generally had a very favourable confirmation to make up those breaches, not otherwise easily to be healed, and so been interpreted as no interruption of this authentic succession; such as the allowance of several schismatical ordinations, if not conferred by downright heretics, and other violent and tumultuary proceedings, which would not before have passed without a very severe censure, but afterwards have been rather judged charitably to be connived at, than with extreme force and danger to be wholly altered. Without a very candid and indulgent interpretation of many public occurrences through a long series of time, all government would be exposed to endless confusions. Reason, interest, and duty, oblige all private persons not to busy themselves in prying into, much more not invidiously to expose every punctilio or fancied defect in the least formality of the constitution of those set over them, where no direct encouragement is given to the most presumptuous and sacrilegious invasions. Neither can we think our most gracious and merciful Redeemer will severely visit on his humble and

* Answer to the 3d objection.

obedient followers the failure of their guides, which it was not in their power to amend, or deny them the salutary benefits of his own institutions, for the want of the most exact regularity of those who dispense them. If he did, I doubt not the Romanists would have as little security as any beside.

Inquiry II. And that brings me to the second inquiry: how far this succession of bishops may be granted to the Roman church. The usual succession of persons in the government of the church of Rome from the very apostles, we are not concerned to call into question, though we have little left upon record of many among them but their bare names, and that signifies not much: and for the small knowledge we have of any of the rest at the beginning, or of what passed among them for some hundred years after St. Clement, we are indebted to the writers of other churches; this so famous church having left none for some considerable time, that I know of, except the decretal epistles, as they are termed, be called in, which the most ingenuous among them will scarce own for any other than spurious, or doubtful at best, (and yet what great stress has been laid on them!) and excepting also the very little remains in other authors. If they, or others for them, have been more accurate in preserving the memorials of the lineal descent of their bishops than most churches (though learned men are not yet agreed, neither among themselves, nor us, about the exact order of the very first of them,) yet I suppose the other patriarchal seats of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch, to mention no more, will think themselves as secure of their own pedigree, and the derivation of it liable to as few exceptions.

For if the charge of *heresy* break the connexion of this chain which Bellarmine here objects against the Greeks, it will be as hard for him to clear the like more notorious objections against Liberius, Vigilius, and Honorius, to mention nothing of later popes, whose very gross errors, if not blasphemies, if they must not come under that name, yet certainly some of them deserve every whit as bad, were as destructive to all religion; (about which may be consulted their own writers of their lives: I take no delight to search after such matters;) not to insist on the foul depravations of faith and good practice we charge upon them for so long a time, I hope not without great necessity and reason.

If schismatical intrusions presently dissolve this orderly succession, which the same author* charges so confidently here upon others, he himself will own Felix II. and Virgilius, to have come in so: and that to save any of them, if possible, from the former imputation, and yet, nevertheless, to fill up the number of lawful popes, yea, of martyrs or confessors too.

To which may be added the several schisms and tumults from *opposite elections*, and sometimes *admissions*. As those at the choice of Damascus,† Symachus I. Boniface II. Sergius I. John XIII. Benedict V. Leo VIII. Gregory V. Benedict IX. Sylvester III. Benedict X. Nicholas II. Calistus II. Honorius II. Innocent II. Urban VI.; and that great schism when three anti-popes, Gregory XII. Benedict XIII. and John XXIII. or, (as some will have it) XXIV. (after the death of Alexander V.) claimed the chair of St. Peter at the same time. Each had his followers; to end which contention, the council of Constance thought fit to depose them all, and set up Martin V. I mention nothing of *that story*, which, be sure, was no tale of the protestants; but some have observed it was first called in question by them. Neither do I insist on the popes seventy years' residence at Avignon in France.

These and such like accidents, whatever difficulties to know who had the best title they may afford, not easy to be cleared to him that had a mind to seek objections, yet seeming for the main no more than what the intricacies and perplexities of the current of human affairs have been ever exposed to, I should not have taken notice of, had not the foundation of all truth or certainty, and the perpetual duration of the church of Christ, been thought to be placed with safety only upon the supposed rock of the stability of this chair, and indefectibility of this church, and, according to many, on the infallibility of him that presides therein; and were they not so bold, to say no more, as to prescribe very strange and extraordinary rules or measures to the supreme providence in the conduct thereof, whatever becomes of any other, or else all must be lost.

We acknowledge the wonderful providence of God, in the preservation of his faith and church, as much from the corruptions

* De Rom. Pont. lib. iv. c. 9, 10. † See Platina of them and others.

of its own members, as from the violence and policies of its professed enemies : but we dare not be so presumptuous as to challenge our Saviour with being wanting to his promise, or complain that we want any needful security to our faith, or that there is any defect in the authority or ministration of our spiritual guides, if any particular person or set number of them may possibly be liable to mistake in matters of faith, or may determine otherwise than they ought, or prove false to their trust. It is a very unsafe, and often fallacious way of arguing, however popular, and that needs less trouble in examination, to argue from persons to things ; as these will continue the same, but those are changeable.

1. But then it may be observed of the Roman succession, that the case seems so extremely changed since the first times. So great an alteration there is in the persons, and in the office to which the succession is now come, that it can hardly be looked on as the continuation of the same. The *episcopal power* is all that we can find for some hundred of years laid claim to (and our note is concerned with this only), though in some few single acts it began by degrees to be stretched, so as to put other bishops upon their guard and protestations, as in the case of appeals by the Africans. Yet were all bishops owned to have an equal share in that ; all to be of like power and authority, all alike successors of the apostles, whether at Rome, or in the meanest city, as we find in the known testimonies of St. Cyprian, and St. Jerome, &c. But the papal power now claimed and exercised, is so vastly and widely different from episcopacy, that scarce any propriety of speech can bring them under the same name.

But to come to matter of fact. Notwithstanding the high eulogiums given by the ancients, on particular occasions, to the Roman church or bishops, and the very bold efforts, and very lofty aspirings, of some of these, yet he must have other eyes, or other spectacles than we can procure, who can espy any thing like the *supremacy* and *authority* claimed by the present papacy, in the principles or practice of the church, for more than five hundred years, which (as hath been observed) could not but have been as discernible in all the histories of those times, as the reference to the power of our kings and manner of our government must be in our own history.

2. Farther, indeed, there seems no great reason for those to be much concerned at the succession of bishops, who are not very favourable to the very order. We know what great opposition in their council of Trent the *divine right of episcopacy* met with from the chief favourites of that see,* when its assertion was so strongly pressed by others. And the author of these Notes is pleased to determine the government of the church not to be chiefly in the bishops, but properly and entirely monarchical, in the pope only, and that he derives his power immediately from Christ. But the bishops have theirs from him as to jurisdiction, which is government.

3. Moreover, they have the less reason to except against any churches for the want of this apostolical order, when their very catechism, that multiplies orders with much less distinction of office, makes this no distinct order, but only a different degree of the same priesthood, the supreme order in their church ascending only gradually from that of a common presbyter to that of bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, and the pope himself. Some of the intermediate we know admit no distinct ordination: nay, the pretended plenary power of the pope hath sometimes, by particular delegations, empowered mitred abbots, but mere presbyters, to supply the place of two of the bishops, if but one be present, even in ordination itself, and that the ordination of a bishop, as Bellarmine in this very note yields. Many other instances might be given of their endeavours to advance the first clerical power, as it were on purpose to fence off the danger of a rival. To what use else should serve so many privileges and exemptions, long complained of? Their chief rise hath been upon the depression of bishops, and the robbing them of their ordinary power. So quite opposite is the true case, on account of the jealousies of some, about this primitive order.

4. Also they will have little cause to glory much in this pretended uninterrupted succession, when they consider how many nullities, according to their own principles, may dissolve and separate the closest connexion thereof; for, besides confused, tumultuary, and simoniacal promotions, from which some of their own writers will scarce free some of them, that principal one of the *intention of the priest being necessary to the effect of any*

* De Pont. Rom. Lib. c. 8, 9. lib. iv. c. 24.

sacrament, should make them fearful of relying too much upon it. For in case this were once wanting in some of the principal sources, through so long a tract of time, variety of circumstances, and different tempers of persons, (which many will think no hard matter to suppose, however can never be certainly proved otherwise,) by this rule they cannot be secure of any order, yea scarce of any true Christian among them.

Inquiry III. So I proceed to the third inquiry, "How insufficient a proof this will afford them of any great advantage." Indeed, Bellarmine himself seems so just, as in part to yield this in his answer to the fourth objection about this note. He says, an argument may be brought that there the church is not, where there is not this succession; but it cannot thence necessarily be gathered, that there the church is, wheresoever this succession is: so that succession seems no positive proof with him. Wherefore he thinks fit to exclude the eastern churches, or break their succession, upon pretences of heresy.

1. For first, this succession is no sufficient evidence of the truth of the doctrine of any church. Indeed, were *tradition* so infallible a conveyance of truth, as some men, that talk of nothing less than demonstration, would vouch; were it impossible for any new opinion to creep into the church; were it necessary that men must believe to-day as they did yesterday; and so in short, as it were, at one leap, carry their belief up to the very apostles, and that the passage of sixteen hundred years were able to make as little alterations in the memorials, or evidences of what doctrines or rules of practice were first delivered by word of mouth, as the last night's sleep does of what passed the day before; then every church of apostolical foundation (and such were all then planted) had been, and would still continue, as infallible as the church of Rome thinks herself, and we should not have had any dispute about their tenets, nor any such exceptions against their succession. What security theirs hath from the defections others are charged with, or have been found liable to; what evidence may be produced that any church, or company of men in the church, may not add, in process of time, some doctrines and usages very prejudicial to the common faith once delivered to the saints; and that the resolution of our faith is only with safety to be made into the perpetuity and infallibility of the Roman church alone by itself, or its

dependents, we are yet to seek: and it is a wonder that the ancients, in all their disputes with heretics and schismatics, should take so great a compass to confute their adversaries from Scripture, reason, and other authorities beside what the see of Rome afforded; and not, with our modern controvertists, make short work, in appealing to this last only effectual way of decision (the authority of the Roman See), had it then been received, and known for so fundamental a principle of Christianity as is now pretended.

2. As this uninterrupted succession of bishops, even when yielded, is no sufficient proof of the truth of the doctrine of any church; so neither is it a warrantable ground of the claim of superiority over another church, which hath not so clear evidences thereof. And if these two proofs fail, those we have to deal with will gain very little by this note; for as the succession may, yea, ought to be supposed good, when sufficient proof appears not to the contrary; so where there really appears a want of this succession, and a need to fly to other churches for the relief thereof, yet this charitable assistance which all ought most freely and willingly offer, or lend to each other, does not presently give one the power over the other for ever after. The apostles themselves seem not to derive their power over the churches by them planted, so much from the success of their labours, as from their immediate divine commission, intimated in the beginning of their epistles, though the one was a great endearment and enforcement to the other: and so it ought to be. We may suppose sometimes greater churches converted by the ministry of the less, who were so happy as to receive the faith before them. Younger churches have many times leaped over the heads of much older; and the inferior having gained some considerable advancement in a *civil* account, have soon arrived at a proportionable promotion in the *ecclesiastical*, as particularly the church of Constantinople. And somewhat like this may be observed in the changes of other cities: superior bishops are ordained by those over whom they after had some authority. For if not only priority of order, but also superiority of jurisdiction, be unalterably entailed upon the oldest, I doubt not the church of Jerusalem, which was certainly the mother-church, must be also the mistress of all. And if that line be extinct, I believe there are many other branches which it must descend to, before it comes to the Roman. Some have disputed

whether Britain itself had not a church as soon. That they should ground a claim from what they will not yield to others sufficient for the same purpose, seems very unequal.

But surely the designs and effects of this *spiritual* warfare, are not like those usually of the *carnal*, merely to enlarge the dominions of their leaders, and advance the power of their governors. The church's conquests consist in the multitude of souls gained to Christ, in the new plantations, or farther growth and improvements of all christian graces and virtues in men's minds; in fastening some good and benefit on them, and not in gaining new outward dependencies to ourselves, any farther than the needful preservation of peace and order in every distinct dominion. What is more, smells too strong of worldly policy, temporal gain, or secular ambition, to have any true place here. When men are more industrious to promote and encourage everywhere sincere piety and probity, and less concerned in the claims of unlimited sovereignty and power, then may we think true religion, and not other interest, to be the first mover with them.

But to consider a little the Cardinal's testimonies here. The *second* out of St. Augustin, "*Psalmus contra partem Donati*," being the fullest and alone pertinent to their purpose, I single out. "*Numerate, inquit, sacerdotes, vel ab ipsa sede Petri, et in ordine illo patrum; quis cui successerit, videte; ipsa est petra quam non vincunt superbæ inferorum portæ.*" "*Enumerate*," saith he, "the priests even from the very seat of Peter, and in that order of fathers; who succeeded another: it is the very rock which the proud gates of hell do not overcome." As to the latter part of it, where the stress lies, we have this argument, that it must be interpreted only as an occasional allusion, that in many places where he purposely expounds that passage of the gospel, he makes Christ himself confessed by St. Peter, to be the rock on which he built his church; as *Retract. lib. i. 21. tom. i. p. 30*, and in *cap. 21 Sti. Johan. tom. ix. p. 572*. "*Super hanc petram quam confessus se*," &c. And, indeed, he asserts no more than matter of fact in a single case, that the seat of St. Peter (to which the Donatists, when condemned by the African bishops, upon their appeal to the emperor, were referred) was as a rock, which the proud gates of hell (so he resembles their presumptions) do not prevail against; that is, the cause was given against them by the Roman bishop,

and others joined with him. Where, though some allusion may be made to the place in the gospel, yet it is not fair to strain an argument thence against the plain and expressly designed exposition of it; especially among such short strictures, of which that tract is made up. And for the other testimonies in Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, we acknowledge their arguments good against upstart teachers of new doctrine; but they expressly join *succession of doctrine with that of persons*, otherwise it had been of no validity, unless by referring their adversaries (who were not much moved by authority) to the evidences of the conveyance of the opposite opinions to them from the first originals. The other two places in St. Augustin, and that of Optatus against the Donatists, imply no more to those presumptuous enclosures of the whole church within their own narrow bounds, and beginners of it from themselves, than a challenge for them to show any thing of the apostolical original thereof, or after conveyance like other churches, and particularly the Roman, wherein St. Augustin, (Epist. 165), after a catalogue of the bishops thereof, thus closes: "In hoc ordine successionis nullus Donatista episcopus invenitur;" "in all this order of succession not a Donatist bishop is found:" and in all his disputes with them, lays the charge of the guilt of their schism upon the separation from all the churches dispersed over the world, according to prophetic and evangelical declarations. No person or place being privileged to prejudicate to all others, it follows in the fore-mentioned, "ut certa sit spes fidelibus, quæ non in homine sed in Domino collocata;" "that the sure hope of the faithful is centered not in man, but in the Lord." All which and more, to any that consult the references throughout, rather confirm *our* claim. We have as good evidences and conveyances as our adversaries can challenge: we pretend not to any new doctrine; but for the main, ours are what themselves dare not but own. What we reject among them, are not only as additions, which none must make to be the first principles of religion, but very dangerous and destructive to the common faith of both. For the proof of such doctrine, or continuance of it, we need no new miracles, or new authority from heaven, but an orderly conveyance of the old; and that we still, thanks be to God, retain.

And truly Bellarmine's inference from the fore-mentioned citations, will carry little or no force, but seems rather to incline

the contrary way. "If they," says he, "made so much of the continued succession of twelve, twenty, or forty bishops, how much may we of more than two hundred!" Certainly the argument from succession here is much stronger, the nearer it comes to the original, from which all the authority and virtue in the following are derived; the water may be supposed clearer, and more natural, the nearer to the fountain-head. There is at least some danger from every remove or change made. I am apt to think they themselves will hardly suppose they have a better argument from succession, than those had twelve hundred or more years since. For if it be good now, surely it was so then; but it will not follow alternately—if then good, it must hold so still. The case may be presumed much different in the succession of ecclesiastical dignities, and secular; in this latter it may be supposed the title gathers still more strength by the length of its continuance—is more confirmed by long possession, and many superinduced obligations, but was, it may be, weakest in its beginnings; as is the case in most particular governments now, when they are known to be of a mere human original, so far as we may, with due modesty and reverence, assert. But spiritual power, in whomsoever, where legitimate, can only descend at first from an immediate divine commission; and this we may suppose gains nothing by passing through human hands and infirmities, being most strong and powerful in its first rise. Indeed, did the Cardinal argue only for a temporal and ecclesiastical monarchy, and would he be content to begin it after Pope Gregory I., and then to rise by degrees for a while, succession appears to me the best argument they have.

However, it is much easier to show fair evidences of the unaltered conveyance of the same truth from one to another, when it has gone through so few hands, and that the eldest bears its date but a very few centuries off (as Irenæus expressly in the place cited, lib. iii. cap. 3; and Epiphanius, *Hær.* 27. *Carpocrat.* p. 104), than it can be when it is multiplied to the present number, and the footsteps of its continued passage are almost worn out through so long a tract of time, and numerous cross accidents.

Yet, to give them their due, the eminent zeal of several of their first bishops, that sealed the custody of the true faith with their blood, as it were, in view of their persecutors; their

general constancy thereto, in which so many wavered or fell in the time of the Arian persecution; the relief and refuge they then, and after, afforded to such as suffered in that, or like causes; as well as the prerogative of their place in the imperial city, and the current tradition of their church's first foundation, by the joint labours of those chief apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul; these gave them great credit in those ages; and while they used their power so well, every one was ready to enlarge it, and to flee thither for sanctuary when oppressed. In which case, men are very apt to speak bountifully of their patrons. And no marvel if they single out sometimes so venerable a name and authority to oppose, and even to bear down the impertinent obstinacy and peevish presumption of every new upstart schismatic or heretic, that would dictate to us strange and unheard-of principles, and unchurch all before them, or beside themselves, and must begin the date of it from themselves: for thus most of the citations mentioned are plainly levelled. And in such a case we should judge the argument sufficient still to silence such an insolent boaster, though *we* should begin the succession no sooner than the time *they* ended, and the time when we own religion began to decline in some parts, but surely not to expire. Nay, I could add,—though we should rise no higher than the Reformation itself, as late as it was, and however contemptuously they are pleased sometimes to speak of the happy instruments thereof.

An extraordinary providence also seems to have attended the preservation of this succession so long under the *Arian Gothic kings*, and a strange temporal felicity, in being still gainers in the end by all the invasions and calamities incident to so many changes of government, by which most besides were losers. But I should think, if they consulted Scripture, reason, and experience of former examples, with present sensible observation, more than any fancied schemes and models of their own what they would judge best to have done, they might think it not unlikely—at least would be more willing to stand to the trial whether it be not so—that upon so long a continued and still growing accession of wealth and greatness to their church, many and great corruptions might creep in; which we charge them with, and have only removed by the Reformation, without turning them or our ancestors out of the church before, or ourselves since.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

THE FIRST NOTE.

CATHOLIC.

	PAGE
The sincere preaching of the faith or doctrine of Christ, as it is laid down in Scripture, is the only mark of the Church of Christ	69
The Church of Rome declines being examined by this rule	69, 70
The weakness of Bellarmine's argument that the <i>name Catholic</i> is a true mark of a true Church exposed in these particulars	70
I. In what respect the name Catholic was esteemed by some of the fathers in their time to be a Note of a Catholic Church, and in what respects it will ever be a standing note of it	71
This is shown to be on account of the Catholic <i>faith</i> —what the Catholic faith is—and why called Catholic.	<i>ibid.</i>
None in the first ages of Christianity went by the name Catholic, but those who professed the true Catholic faith	72
II. No argument can be drawn from the bare name Catholic, to prove a Church to be Catholic	<i>ibid.</i>
Though the name Catholic was of an ancient date, the Christian Church was not known by this name at the beginning, and therefore this name is not an essential note of it	73
Names are often arbitrarily and falsely imposed, and therefore nothing can be concluded from them	<i>ibid.</i>
They are often used as distinctions only	74
It does not follow that because the name Catholic in that time, when it was for the most part conjoined with the true Catholic faith, was a sure sign of a true Church, it must always be so, even when the name and the thing are parted	75
The worst of heretics laid claim to this name.	<i>ibid.</i>
The rule to know the true Church by, proved from Lactantius and St. Austin	<i>ibid.</i>
It does not follow that because the being called after the names of particular men in an age when all so called were for the most part corrupt in the faith, was a sure sign of heresy, it must always be so	75, 76

	PAGE
III. The Church of Rome, having egregiously corrupted the Catholic faith, neither is, nor deserves the name of a Catholic Church	76
This justified, by comparing her doctrine in several points, with that delivered by Christ and his Apostles	77
For instance, it is contrary to Scripture that saints and angels are to be prayed to and worshipped	<i>ibid.</i>
The worshipping of images contrary to the second commandment, which the Romanists make the same with the first	78
The Scripture commands <i>all</i> persons to read the Scriptures—the Church of Rome does not allow this liberty to the laity, except by license . . .	<i>ibid.</i>
The Scriptures forbid prayer in an unknown tongue, and the Church of Rome enjoins such and no other	79
Purgatory contrary to Scripture	<i>ibid.</i>
The denying the cup to the laity contrary to the express institution of our Saviour.	80
The Scripture says, that the bread and wine, even after consecration, is bread and wine still—the Church of Rome says, the bread and wine is transubstantiated with the natural body and blood of Christ	81
The propitiatory sacrifice of the mass according to Scripture derogatory to Christ's own priestly oblation, whereby he once offered himself a complete sacrifice of expiation	82
In all these particulars the Church of Rome a corrupter of the Christian faith and doctrine, and consequently deserves not the name of Catholic. <i>ibid.</i>	

THE SECOND NOTE.

ANTIQUITY.

This mark and character of a true Church is not proper to the Church of Rome, nor in truth doth it belong to it. Three things are offered to prove this	83
I. That the plea of bare Antiquity is not proper to the Church, but common to it with other societies of false religion	<i>ibid.</i>
The notes of a thing must be proper to that of which they are a note, and not common to it with other things	<i>ibid.</i>
1. Because what is proper to a thing is inseparable from it, and did ever belong to it since it had a being, and can at no time be absent from it	84
2. Other societies have laid claim to this Note, and it could not be denied them, and therefore it is no proper Note of a Church—the Samaritans claimed it against the Jews; the Jews against Christ; and the Pagans against both	84, 85
This shows that bare Antiquity cannot be a Note of Truth.	85, 86
Antiquity and priority widely different	86

	PAGE
A two-fold Antiquity; one in respect of us, and the other absolute and in itself	86
The Church of Rome will not be tried only by the Scriptures, which is the true Antiquity	86, 87
Error almost as ancient as truth; for which reason several wicked doctrines, running down to posterity, have made use of the plea of Antiquity, to give them countenance and support	87, 88
II. The present Church of Rome vainly pretends to true Antiquity, <i>i. e.</i> to ancient truth	88
Wherein true Antiquity doth consist.	88, 89
The present Church of Rome not <i>ancient</i> , by reason of that alteration they have made in the <i>ancient creed</i>	89
Cardinal Bellarmine's ratiocination against this charge, consisting of six things, to be observed in all changes of religion, none of which, he says, can be shown in the Church of Rome, since the Apostle's time . <i>ibid.</i>	
His reasoning built upon very false grounds; this considered and largely answered in four particulars:—	
1. As being contrary to all history and experience, there having been great changes in religion, the authors and the beginnings, &c. of which cannot be known	90
2. Neither do the examples the Romanists bring for this their <i>reasoning</i> serve to any other purpose but to show the falseness of it, as in the case of the Nestorian and Arian heresies	90, 91
3. Supposing them true, they would uphold the greatest impieties	91
The heathen gods and their oracles, supported by this argument . <i>ibid.</i>	
4. The Roman Church itself an instance of this, there being an acknowledged change in it, and yet they cannot tell who first began it—viz. communion in one kind	92
Two instances of innovation out of Polydore Virgil, when and by whom brought into the Church of Rome:—	
1. Their grand article of faith, the papal authority, brought in by Victor, and carried on by the following bishops	92, 93
The present definitions of the Catholic Church, and the power of the Pope to depose kings, not claimed till Gregory VII., <i>i. e.</i> 1000 years after Christ.	93
2. It is known when and how images crept into the Church	94
It is little more than 100 years since unwritten traditions were decreed to be a part of the rule of faith, <i>i. e.</i> of the word of God	<i>ibid.</i>
III. That the religion of the Church of England by law established, is the true primitive Christianity	94, 95

THE THIRD NOTE.

DURATION.

	PAGE
Three things are here considered	97
I. What is to be understood by the term Duration?—Duration includes three things—	
1. The being of a Church from the beginning.	
2. The continuance of that Church to the end.	
3. The continuance of that Church from the beginning to the end, without interruption.	
Bellarmine's application of the first of these to the Church of Rome, deficient in the latter branches	98
II. How far Duration is a Note of the true Church.	
This is no Note by which a true Church is to be found out, or distinguished from the false,—for four reasons:—	
1. The nature of the thing will not permit that it should be a note	99
2. That cannot be a Note of the true Church, which doth not inseparably belong to the Church in all seasons or cases.	100
3. That which is a note must be proper to the thing which it is the note of, and not common to other things as well as that. This note common to false churches as well as true	100, 101
4. If it be a Note of the true Church, then those could not be true Churches which have not had that Duration.	101
This unchurches the seven Churches of Asia	<i>ibid.</i>
III. The Church of Rome hath no just and sufficient title to this character.	
This is proved as to—1. Place—2. Persons—3. Order—4. Doctrine.—These being the things by which a Church doth exist, and is made visible.	
Rome not always the principal seat of the Church	102
Avignon was the place for 70 years where the Pope and the whole court resided.—Several Popes heretics	<i>ibid.</i>
Two Popes at once contending for the chair, and this for above 40 years together; and at one time three Popes	<i>ibid.</i>
The Church of Rome compared with itself in reference to several doctrines. <i>ibid.</i>	
What the Church of Rome now holds, and what the Church of Rome did hold	103—109
Her being the mother-church, and the Pope being Christ's vicar	103
Concerning the Apocryphal Books	<i>ibid.</i>
Scripture and tradition.—Scripture in unknown tongues.—Merit	104
Indulgences.—Purgatory	105
Prayers in an unknown tongue.—Praying to saints.—Image-worship.	106

	PAGE
Sacraments, the number of them.—Transubstantiation.—Communion in one kind	107
Solitary Masses.—Auricular Confession.—Extreme Unction.—Priest's Marriage	108
In all these particulars the Church of Rome is not now what it was.	

THE FOURTH NOTE.

AMPLITUDE, OR MULTITUDE AND VARIETY OF BELIEVERS.

The Scriptures first gave us the notion of a Church	111
A true Christian Church professes the true Christian Faith	<i>ibid.</i>
Instead of this, those of the Church of Rome have invented several notes and characters of a Church, which are not to be met with, or are not plainly delivered in Scripture	112
What Bellarmine understands by this Note Amplitude	<i>ibid.</i>
In answer to him,	
I. It is shown this cannot be a Note of the true Church. (1) Whether you consider the numbers thereof under either the notion of a great multitude; or, (2) a great multitude of believers.	113
Satan's kingdom more numerous than the kingdom of Christ	<i>ibid.</i>
The worshippers of Mahomet exceed the members of Christ's true Church in number, since the Romanists made themselves the only Catholics.	<i>ibid.</i>
The kingdom of Christ not to be distinguished from the kingdom of Antichrist, by this Note	114
This note therefore no true character of a Church.	
The several places of Scripture whence Bellarmine pretends he fetches this Note of his	<i>ibid.</i>
This is so far from being a Note of the Church, that it is no more than the variable state and condition of it	115
This acknowledged by the Cardinal himself in his explication of this Note.	<i>ibid.</i>
The present state of the Church not to be compared with what it shall be before the end of the world	<i>ibid.</i>
Many plain prophecies brought for the proof of this.	116
The Cardinal's citation of Vincentius Lirinensis, for the confirming of this Note, considered	<i>ibid.</i>
II. Supposing this to be a true Note of the Catholic Church, it doth no service to the Church of Rome, as to her pretension of being the true Catholic Church	116—120
III. Supposing again this Note to be true, it doth the Reformed Churches a very great service in demonstrating them to be true parts of the Catholic Church. This is demonstrated by two arguments :—	

	PAGE
1. That in the first ages of Christianity, the Catholic Church then was more ours, than now it is the Romanists'	120, 121
That there is a great agreement between the ancient Churches of Rome, and the present Church of England	121
This is evident by comparing the doctrine and worship of each together	<i>ibid.</i>
2. That upon computation, the Churches subject to the Roman See exceed not the Reformed Churches in Amplitude, or multitude of members	121—125

THE FIFTH NOTE.

SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS.

In examination of this Note three things are inquired into:—

I. How far this Note may be necessary to any Church	127
True and lawful Pastors necessary to the constitution of the Church; and this pastoral power derived from Christ	128
The power of Ordination entrusted to Bishops, the ordinary successors of the Apostles	<i>ibid.</i>
The government of the Church of England by Bishops, and its succession not interrupted in the Reformation	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Observ.</i> 1. The succession of Bishops necessary to the complete constitution of a Church, yet it may be doubted whether it is indispensable to the very being of it, so as to unchurch every place that wants them . .	129
<i>Observ.</i> 2. It is not necessary for every Church which firmly presumes upon this lawful and orderly succession, even from the Apostles, to be able to produce the records of its conveyance through every age, and in every single person through whom it has passed	<i>ibid.</i>
The ancients contented themselves with delivering down to us the succession of Bishops in the greater Sees and Mother Churches, as of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, &c.	130
<i>Observ.</i> 3. Some irregularities and uncanonical proceedings in times of great schisms, or public disturbance, have been interpreted as no interruption of this authentic succession	<i>ibid.</i>
II. How far the succession of Bishops may be granted to the Church of Rome	131
Little left on record of many of the first Bishops of the Church of Rome, except their bare names	<i>ibid.</i>
If heresy breaks the succession, this is chargeable on the Church of Rome	<i>ibid.</i>
If schismatic intrusions can dissolve the order of succession, this is likewise chargeable on the Bishops of that Church, viz. Fœlix II., and Vigilius	132

	PAGE
1. The case of the Roman succession extremely changed since the first time	133
No supremacy to be found in that Church for the first 500 years and more	<i>ibid.</i>
2. The Church of Rome not very favourable to the order of Bishops .	134
The Divine right of Episcopacy disputed in the Council of Trent .	<i>ibid.</i>
3. Their catechism makes this no distinct order, but only a different degree of the same priesthood	<i>ibid.</i>
III. How insufficient a proof this succession will afford them of any great advantage.	135
1. Succession is no sufficient evidence of the truth of the doctrine of any Church	<i>ibid.</i>
2. An uninterrupted succession of Bishops is no warrantable ground of the claim of superiority over another Church which has not so clear evidence thereof	136
The Cardinal's testimonies out of St. Augustine, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, examined	137, 138
His inferences from these citations about succession, considered .	139, 140

THE
SIXTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE
WITH THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

BY DR. PAYNE.

WE are very willing to own this for a true mark of the church, its agreeing with the doctrine of the primitive church; and we are so far from confuting Bellarmine for giving it, that we do not doubt but he has hereby confuted himself and the whole cause of the Roman church. For if we may be allowed to go back to the primitive church, and to examine the doctrine and belief of *that*, in order to find out what is the true church at present, then the pretended infallibility of the present church, and the necessity of receiving and believing all that she imposes, must be set by, till it appears that she requires of us the same doctrine (and no other), that was taught and believed by the primitive church; for according to this note, it does not appear which is the true church, till it first appears that it agrees with the doctrine of the primitive one; and till it appears that it is a true church, it cannot surely appear to be an infallible one: for it cannot be pretended that infallibility belongs to any but the true church; and therefore it must be first known that the present Romish church agrees with the primitive, before it can be known that she is an infallible guide or teacher: so that we manifestly gain this first by this Note of the Church,

* “Sexta nota est conspiratio in doctrina cum Ecclesia Antiqua.” — BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 9.

that all those big and blustering claims to infallibility must be postponed and laid aside, till that of agreeing with the doctrine of the primitive church be made out; and when that is done, we shall not have quite so much reason to question her infallibility. We desire nothing more than to have the matter brought to this issue, Whether the doctrines of the *reformed* or the *Romish* church do agree best with the primitive? Since for reasons well known to themselves, and very much suspected by others, they are so willing to go off from Scripture, and to decline the judgment of *that* as incompetent and insufficient in most of the controversies between us, we are very ready to leave them to be decided by any other indifferent arbitrator; for we think it is a little odd and unreasonable they should make *themselves the only judges* of what is in difference between us; and therefore we are very ready to stand to the award and umpirage of the primitive church, and we are not in the least afraid to venture our whole cause to the sentence and decision of that; for though the *Scripture* be our *only rule* of faith and doctrine necessary to be believed by us, because we know of no other revelation but that, (and nothing but revelation makes any doctrine necessary to be believed,) yet we are very willing to take the sense and meaning of Scripture both from itself, and from the primitive church too: so as, according to Vincentius Lirinensis, “to have the line of scriptural interpretation be directed by the rule of ecclesiastical and catholic judgment;”* that is, to have the primitive church direct us in interpreting Scripture where it stands in need of it, or where there is any controversy about its meaning. Let the Scripture, therefore, as explained by the primitive church, and not by the private judgment of any particular man, be allowed and agreed by us to be the rule of our faith; and let that be accounted the true church, whose faith and doctrine is most conformable and agreeable with the primitive.

We desire nothing more, than to find out the *true church* by the *true faith*, and we think this is the true way to find it out: for christian faith is prior to the christian church; and that must be first known and supposed, before we can know any such thing as

* “Ut prophetica et apostolica interpretationis linea secundum ecclesiastici et catholici sensus normam dirigatur.”—*Vincent. Lirinens. contra Hæres.* cap. 2.

a church ; for it is the faith makes the church, and not the church the faith ; and therefore the true church is to be known by the true doctrine, and not the true doctrine by the church, as some folks say.

If a church then has ever so many other glorious *marks*, yet if it has not the true faith, according to the rule before laid down, it cannot be the true church ; and if it have ever so true a *succession of pastors*, deriving their power in an uninterrupted line from the apostles, yet if it have not a true *succession of doctrine* too from them, it is not a true church : so far indeed as it holds and professes the common christian faith, so far, for that very reason, it is a true church ; and so far we allow the Roman to be a true church ; and so far they cannot deny us to be one, as the same faith and fundamentals of Christianity are received and believed by both of us ; for this faith being the same to both of us, makes us both so far to be true churches upon the same grounds ; but *how far we differ in matters of faith*, whether we or they be the true church, is *the question* between us, and we are willing to have this determined by the primitive church. If the faith then and doctrine of the Roman church, wherein it differs from us, be the same with the faith and doctrine of the primitive church, then that is the true church : if it be contrary, and unagreeable to the faith and doctrine of the primitive, then it is not the true church, but a false and erroneous one.

And here we ought to make a *particular* inquiry and examination of all those matters of faith which are in controversy between us, and bring *each* of them to the test and trial, and see which church does most agree in all those disputed doctrines with the doctrine of the primitive church ; for here we must be allowed to examine particular doctrines that are in difference between us : and every private Christian who is seeking for the true church, must, if he would find it by this mark of Bellarmine, be allowed to inquire into and examine the doctrines of the present church, and see whether they are agreeable to those of the primitive or not ; and this he must do by his private judgment, and by the best means and helps he can use to this purpose : for he is not yet supposed to have *found out* the true church, but to be *finding* it out by this mark given of it ; and till he has found it out by

this mark and direction, he cannot be under its guidance and conduct, so that he must make use of his own reason and judgment at least till he has thus found it ; that is, he must have the liberty to search and inquire into the faith and doctrines of the primitive church, and to judge for himself as well as he can, by his own best discretion, and the best helps he can use, *which* church does best agree in its faith and doctrines with the primitive. And according as he shall, upon his own examination and inquiry, find, so he must choose that church which he thinks is the truest ; but he must not give himself up to the absolute guidance and direction of any church, at least till he has by this way found out the true one ; which is another manifest *advantage* that we have by this note against our adversaries, who are for bearing men down with the bold pretence of infallibility, and the terrible fright of damnation out of the true church, rather than suffering them, according to this true method, to find it out.

And as he must thus use his own judgment in an impartial search into the doctrines of the primitive church, which will have as many inconveniences in it, I fear, to Romanists as they are apt to object against searching, to this end, into the Scriptures ; so he must examine all the *particular* doctrines that are controverted between *both* churches, to see which are most agreeable to the faith of the primitive, for he cannot know this in the lump and by the gross ; and as to tell him, as they sometimes do, that it is impossible for their church to have departed from the faith of the primitive, and that the present age could not alter from the doctrine of the foregoing, and so upward, this is not to make the primitive faith a *note* of the present church, but to *prevent* all inquiry about this note, and to make it wholly useless and insignificant.

He that will therefore make use of this mark to know the true church by, must be supposed and allowed to inquire into the doctrine of the primitive church about all those particular controversies and matters of faith that are in difference between us, and must not have his inquiry stopt and precluded by any general pretences of the infallibility either of *oral tradition*, or of the *present church*, but must freely and impartially examine the particular doctrines that are controverted, that so he may bring every one of them to the touchstone of the primitive faith, and try whether

they are agreeable to the same or not ; and according as he finds this, that is, whatsoever church he find to hold the same doctrine with the primitive in all the particular points of difference, *that* he must conclude to be the *true church* from this note given of it.

Our adversaries do not usually care to enter into particular points of controversy, wherein they are very sensible they shall be sooner foiled and baffled ; and therefore they generally waive those which are capable of being made more plain and evident to most men's capacities ; and they choose rather to dispute and wrangle about more general and intricate matters, in which there is some more room to cavil, and to amuse and perplex themselves and others with seeming difficulties. So that though particular controversies may be made very plain, and it appears often in them as clear almost as the light, on which side the truth is ; as, whether prayers ought to be in a known tongue—whether the communion ought to be in both kinds—whether the Scriptures are to be read by the people—and the like ; yet to avoid those, and to prevent the disadvantage of such manifest and particular points, they carry the dispute off to other things, and run into the general controversies of *infallibility* and *church authority*, and *resolution of faith*, and a *judge in controversies*, and the like ; and here they think there is more room for cavil and sophistry, and they can hereby lead men, if not into scepticism and doubtfulness, yet into a maze and labyrinth, where they shall not easily get out. Which way of theirs seems to me, just as if a person in a plain controversy about weight or measure, which were otherwise easy to be determined, should, to avoid that, think fit to run into the perplexed dispute, what was the true standard of weights and measures ? or everlastingly wrangle about that question, whether matter consisted of divisible or indivisible parts ? and because he could raise difficulties here, and keep up a long and intricate controversy about those matters, would not be brought to yield, that a pound was heavier than an ounce, or an ell longer than an inch. I cannot but think that some of our particular controversies may be almost as clearly decided as those two ; and that the running into some general ones, is as remote and sophistical as the other.

We must therefore, according to this note of the church, not be anticipated or prevented with any general and more perplexed

dispute, but we must fairly examine all the particular doctrines of the church, and see whether they are agreeable with those of the primitive church or not, before we can find out the true church at present. Not that the true church we are to look for, is confined to any particular place or country ; but like a great homogeneal body, every part of which is of the same nature with the whole, wherever the true primitive faith is professed in all the parts of it, there is a true church ; and all particular churches being united together in the same bond of faith, do make up the *catholic* church over all the world. If there were but one particular church upon the whole earth, that did profess this true faith, *that alone* might be called the *catholic* church, because that alone had that catholic faith, which did properly make and constitute the true church : but this faith being common to a great many particular churches, this makes them to be all true, and all catholic, as to faith ; but as to place, it is ridiculous to call any one catholic, and as absurd as to call a part the whole ; in this sense no church is catholic, in the other every church is, that holds the whole christian faith. We are not therefore to seek for any particular church, that shall usurp to itself the name of catholic, to the exclusion of all others, but for any church that maintains the true catholic faith professed by the primitive, which upon that account is a true church, and acknowledged so by this mark which is here given of it.

To find out such a one, and to distinguish it from others, we must very carefully inquire into all the particular doctrines and points of faith which are held by it, and see whether they are agreeable to the faith and doctrine of the primitive church ; and according to this method, and saving to ourselves all the fore-mentioned advantages of it, we are very willing to have the differences adjusted between us and the church of Rome, and to have it decided by this note, whether *we or they* be the *true church* ; that is, whether we or they, in all matters of controversy between us, do most agree with the doctrine of the primitive church.

And here is a very large scope offered to me, and what has taken up a great many volumes on both sides. To most people Scripture, one would think, should be a shorter and an easier, and therefore a better way to know the true church by.

But since our adversaries are not willing to leave the cause to that, we are ready to accept of the primitive church to be judge between us ; and, as has been often offered before by Bishop Jewel and others, we shall be very willing to stand to its award and decision : for however some few divines of the Reformation, before they were so well acquainted with antiquity, and when they could not so well distinguish what was genuine from what was spurious and corrupted by the Romish church, were at first especially more jealous and distrustful than they need to have been of it, and unwilling to venture their cause to any other sentence but that of Scripture, which had so plainly decided for them, and was indeed the most proper to be appealed to ; yet the greatest number, and the most learned of the protestant writers, have never declined the judgment of the primitive church, but next to the inspired writings of the apostles, have always esteemed it, and been willing to be determined by it : and we are well assured, that the ancient church, even the ancient Roman itself, as well as the whole Christian besides, is in all material points on the protestant side, and a perfect stranger, if not an utter enemy, to those new articles of faith, and corruptions of doctrine, which have been since brought into the western church, and which we have for that reason protested against, because they were unknown and contrary to the faith and doctrine of the primitive church.

It would too much exceed the set limits of this paper, to make this out so fully as might easily be done, by going through the chief points of difference between us. Bellarmine, in his discourse upon this note, goes wholly off from it, and chooses rather to pursue Luther and Calvin, and some other worthy reformers, through all the paths of calumny and slander ; but I shall not follow him, to take him off from those false and injurious representations he hath made of their doctrines. If any body has the curiosity to see the art of misrepresenting in its greatest perfection, let him but read that chapter ; but if he will see it as perfectly shamed and exposed, let him read Bishop Morton's long and learned answer to it.* We are examining the doctrines, and finding out the marks of the *church*, and not of *particular men* ; and had Calvin, or others, taught any such doctrines as are there

* *Apologia Catholica*, p. 61 to p. 278.

very falsely laid to their charge, I know none who had been concerned in them but themselves; and no church could have been prejudiced by them any farther than it had received them: I shall therefore keep more close to Bellarmine's *note*, though *not* to his *method* upon it; and I assure a late adviser,* it is not the design of confuting him, but setting men right in the way to the true religion and the true church, when others are so busy to draw them off by false marks and pretences, which is the cause of this undertaking.

I confess it would be too prolix, as Bellarmine says, to produce all the testimonies of the ancients, thereby to show what was the doctrine of the primitive church, in every particular point controverted between us; I shall therefore offer only some plain and brief remarks, by which the sense of the primitive church may be undeniably known in most of the controversies, and by which it will appear what was the doctrine of the church then, and how contrary that of the church of Rome is now to it.

And here I should first begin with the most *primitive*, that is, with the *apostolic* church, which truly and only deserves the title of being mother and mistress of all christian churches that ever were or shall be in the world: it is as vain as arrogant for any later and particular church to assume that to itself, which is but a sister church at most, and younger than some of the rest; and though more fine and proud, yet not half so honest and uncorrupt. This apostolic church, which was founded and governed by the apostles over all the world, is the true standard of the christian church; and, as in revealed religion, "That which is first, is true," according to Tertullian's axiom,† because it comes nearest to the first pure fountain of revelation; so, as he adds, "That is first which is from the beginning, and from the apostles." We should first then examine what was the faith and doctrine of the apostolic church, the greatest and almost only account of which we have in their own canonical writings, which are received and allowed as such by the whole christian church; and in these our adversaries find so little of their own late and new doctrines, that they cannot

* Advice to the Confuter of Bellarmine.

† "Id verum quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, ab initio quod ab apostolis."—*Tertul. de Præscript.* lib. iv.

but own, that these are insufficient to authorize and establish most of them, without the authority of the present church, and without the help of unwritten traditions.

When we produce Scripture against our adversaries, we then produce the only authentic records of the apostolic church, and the only certain account we have of the faith and doctrine of the most primitive church; let them object therefore ever so much against Scripture as a rule of faith, yet whilst it contains the only sure testimony of what was taught and believed by the first christian church, as far as any of these doctrines are not in Scripture, so far they cannot appear to be doctrines of the apostolic church; and whilst we hold all that faith and all those doctrines that are contained in Scripture, we hold all that can be *known* to be so in the most pure and most primitive church; and whatsoever they have *added* to Scripture, which they will needs have to be but an imperfect rule of faith, they have added, so far as can be known, to the doctrine of the *apostolic church*: for if Scripture be not the only rule of *that*, yet it is the only *historical account* we have of it. But I shall not at present deal with them out of Scripture, though as it is only a record and evidence of the apostolical faith, they will count this but a trick, I know, to draw them into a Scripture-dispute, which they are mighty averse to, and which they design to avoid by an appeal from that to the primitive church: we will go on therefore with our *note*, as they, I suppose, mean and understand it; and that we may not be too troublesome to them with Scripture and the apostolic writings, we will come several ages lower, even down to those times wherein the church was in its glorious state under the first christian emperors, and examine whether their doctrines or ours were most agreeable to those of this primitive church. Let us now come briefly to inquire in some particular instances, and by some few short remarks and observations.

And first, Was any such thing as their pretended *supremacy* then allowed of? when in the first general council at Nice, *there was a limited power assigned to the bishop of Rome, as there was to the other metropolitans of Alexandria and Antioch, who were to keep their bounds set them by ancient custom,** which is utterly

* Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθθη κρατεῖται, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τον Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν. Ἐπειδὴ καὶ

inconsistent with an universal supremacy over the whole church, by a *divine right*; as is since pretended and claimed, contrary to all antiquity. For the next general council appoints the bishop of Constantinople “to have prerogatives of honour next to the bishop of Rome because that was new Rome;”* so that it was the imperial city of Rome which gave the honour of being the first bishop in the church, and not a divine institution, or a succession from St. Peter; and when Constantinople, by the emperor’s removing thither, became the next great city, the bishop partook of the honour of the city: and in the fourth general council at Chalcedon, had for *that same reason* equal privileges conferred upon him with the bishop of old Rome,† as the fathers expressly declare: to which I shall add, the famous case of appeals, which was claimed about the year 418, by pope Zosimus, over the African church, not by divine right, but by a pretended ecclesiastical canon, which was found afterwards to be forged; and also add that the power of the church of Rome to receive appeals, or to judge the causes of other churches, was fully disowned and disclaimed:‡ and this, with the exemption of the churches of Milan, Ravenna, and Aquileia, from the jurisdiction of the church of Rome, though they were so near neighbours to it, even in Italy itself, is enough to give full satisfaction to any reasonable man, what a different opinion the primitive church had of the church of Rome, from what it now has of itself, concerning an universal supremacy, and of its being the mother and mistress of all churches.

The next most peculiar doctrine of popery, is *Transubstantiation*; which, as it was formerly owned by Valentia,§ and

τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τούτῳ σύνηθες ἔστιν ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεῖα σῶζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Concil. Nicen. can. 6.

* Τὸν μέντοι Κωνσταντίνου πόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὴν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ῥώμην. Concil. Constantinop. can. 3.

† Καὶ γὰρ τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην, οἱ πατέρες εἰκότως ἀποδεδώκασιν τὰ πρεσβεῖα, καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ σκόπῳ κινούμενοι οἱ ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα θεοφιλέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι, τὰ ἴσα πρεσβεῖα ἀπένειμαν τῷ τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ἀγιωτάτῳ θρόνῳ. Concil. Chalced. can. 28.

‡ Concil. Carthag. 6.

§ De Transub. lib. ii. cap. 7.

Cusanus,* and a great many of the schoolmen, Scotus, Durandus, and others,† not to have been the doctrine of the primitive church, so it has been lately proved at large by one of their own communion;‡ though if for that reason it may be thrown out from being an article of faith by the members of the Roman church, they will leave but very few articles proper to themselves, according to the principle of that gentleman—to wit, the making not the present, but the primitive church, a rule of their faith; which if they will universally follow, it will lead them quite out of the Roman church, as well as out of that single error of it. We have such excellent treatises of late about this,§ which prove it beyond all exception, and beyond all answer, to be no doctrine of the primitive church, that I shall add nothing about it, but only these two observations.

First, That it appears not by any liturgy or eucharistic form, that was ever used by the church,—no, not by the Roman canon itself, which is much ancients than this doctrine, and therefore not so conformed to it,—that the church ever used any prayer to this purpose at the eucharist, that the substance of the sacramental elements should be changed or done away, and the flesh and blood of Christ substituted instead of them, under the species or accidents; but only that they might be made the body and blood of Christ by the Spirit's coming down upon them; so that it was only a spiritual and sacramental, not a substantial change of them, that was ever prayed for, or ever believed; for if the church had always had this faith, it would surely have sometimes prayed in it.

Secondly, I observe, that in those times when this doctrine came first into the church, which was a little before Berengarius, it was so new that it was not fully digested, nor perfectly understood, even by those who then held it; as appears by that blundering recantation which was drawn up for him, after the examination of no less than three popes and five synods, wherein he is made to

* Exercit. lib. vi. Ser. 40.

† Vid. Præf. ad Johan. Major.

‡ A treatise written by an author of the Church of Rome touching transubstantiation.

§ See Discourse of Transubstantiation. Transubstantiation no Doctrine of the Primitive Fathers. The Doctrine of the Trinity and Transubstantiation compared, 1 par.

say, that “after consecration the *true* body and blood of Christ is not only sacramentally, but *sensibly* and truly handled and broke by the hands of the priests, and ground by the teeth of the faithful.”* This sensible and real handling, and breaking and grinding Christ’s body, is so strange and dreadful a thing, that the glossator observes this upon it, that “unless you do understand these words of Berengarius in a sound sense,”† that is, contrary to what the words signify and mean, “you will fall into a greater heresy than that of Berengarius himself;” by which it appears, that this monster of transubstantiation, as a great man‡ of their own afterwards calls it, was so unformed and misshapen a thing at that time, that it was a sign it was then but new come into the world, and had need of being farther licked into a better shape.

If transubstantiation were then but new, those other doctrines which have issued from it, and are its proper production, could not be old; such as adoration of the sacrament, communion in one kind, solitary masses, and the proper and propitiatory sacrifice of the mass: and therefore I shall not say any thing of them, since their date will be owned to be as late as that of transubstantiation; and though they may not follow from it, yet they cannot be maintained or believed without it; so that what has been said against the one, takes away the very foundation of the other.

As to the *number of the sacraments*, though the council of Trent has declared this to be exactly seven, and made it an article of faith to believe so; yet no man will have the confidence to say, that this number was determined by the primitive church, when they can bring no author who makes any mention of such a number, till *eleven hundred years after Christ*; and Bellarmine thinks it *unreasonable* we “should require them to show this either in the Scriptures or the fathers;”§ though if it be an article of

* “Post consecrationem verum corpus et sanguinem Christi, sensualiter non solum sacramento, sed veritate manibus sacerdotum tractari, frangi, et fidelium dentibus atteri.”—*Grat. de Consec. dist. ii.*

† “Nisi sane intelligas verba Berengarii, in majorem insides hæresin quam ipse habuit.”—*Glos. ib.*

‡ Perrone. See the excellent Preface to a Discourse on the Holy Eucharist, in two great points.

§ “Non debere adversarios petere ut ostendamus in Scripturis aut Patribus nomen septenarii numeri sacramentorum.”—BELLAR. *de Effect. Sacram. lib. ii. cap 24.*

faith, which must be believed upon pain of damnation, there ought to be something to show for it, one would think, out of one of them.

Was the necessity of *auricular confession* a doctrine of the primitive church, when, in the time of Peter Lombard, he tells us, that “learned men were found to have different sentiments about it,” and that “the doctors delivered themselves variously and differently upon it,”* and therefore it could not be the doctrine of the church then?—but of this see a learned treatise written on purpose.

Was the Roman *purgatory* a doctrine of the primitive church, of which Alphonsus à Castro confesses, “There is almost no mention of it in any of the ancient writers?”† Bishop Fisher‡ is of the same mind with him; and that old christian custom of celebrating the day of their friend’s death as a festival and day of rejoicing, because they were then released from all pain and sorrow, (whereas the day of nativity, as being the introduction to earthly misery, they did not celebrate),§ is to me a plain argument they did not in the least believe any such thing.

What shall we think then of *indulgences* as they relate to purgatory? Had the ancient church any such notion of them? Does not Alphonsus own, that “they were received very late into the church?”|| And Cajetan says, “There is no authority of Scriptures, or of any fathers, Greek or Latin, that bring them to our knowledge.”¶

Prayers and oblations for the dead, I confess, are a very ancient practice, but I know no doctrine the primitive church had concerning them, but that of the communion of saints which was both in the church militant and triumphant; and they are so far from bordering upon the Roman doctrine of purgatory, that they

* “In his enim etiam docti diversa sentire inveniuntur, quia super his varia ac penè adversa tradidisse videntur doctores.” *Lomb. Sent.* lib. iv. dist. 17.

† “De purgatorio fere nulla in antiquis Scriptoribus mentio.” *Alphons. de Castro contra Hæres.* lib. viii. p. 115.

‡ Roffens. contra Luther. Art. 18.

§ “Nos non nativitatís diem celebramus, cum sit dolorum atque tentationum introitus, sed mortis diem celebramus, utpote omnium dolorum depositionem.” *Comment. in Job. apud Origen.* lib. iii.

|| “Earum usus in Ecclesia videtur sero receptus.” *Alphons. de Castro.* lib. viii. p. 115.

¶ Cajet. Opusc. c. 15.

utterly destroy it, for they were offered for those who were owned to be in happiness, and could never be supposed to go to purgatory—to wit, for saints, and martyrs, and apostles, and even for the Virgin Mary herself, as appears by the ancient liturgies.*

As to *prayers in an unknown tongue*, this cannot, I hope, be said to be the practice of the primitive church; and if the language of the church of Rome had been as unalterable as she pretends her faith is, her prayers had been in a known tongue now; but I doubt not they are both equally changeable.

As to the *worship of saints and angels*, and *the offering up prayers to them and to the blessed Virgin*, I shall offer but one consideration out of antiquity, which does for ever destroy all manner of worship, of what degree soever, to any but the true God; and that is, the charge of idolatry, which was laid by all the orthodox fathers, against the Arians, for worshipping and praying to Christ, when they believed him not to be the true God, but only a creature, though of the most exalted nature. This does so fully shew the sense of the church against all worship, be it of what kind it will, to any creature, (for it was not the highest and most sovereign worship which the Arians were supposed or charged to give to Christ,) that it is the plainest thing in the world, that there could be no manner of worship then to saints or angels, or to the blessed Virgin, as there is now in the Roman church: but he that will see the clearest account of antiquity in this matter, let him consult a most excellent discourse “concerning the worship of the blessed Virgin and the saints, with an account of the beginnings and rise of it amongst Christians; against Monsieur de Meaux.”

As to the *worship of images*, it is too well known at what time and with what opposition that was brought into the Western Church, and how great a part of it did then declare against them; so that it was impossible that should have been the doctrine of the primitive church, which was with so great a struggle and violence brought into the Roman, at the latter end of the seventh century. As to the first ages, it is plain from the instance of Epiphanius and the council of Eliberis, that they would not suffer images and pictures in their churches, and at first hardly thought the very

* Liturg. Egyptiac. Liturg. Chrysost.

making of them to be lawful, as appears from Clemens Alexandrinus.

But I must not insist on particulars: I offer only some few undeniable breviates of antiquity, by which it cannot but evidently appear to any ingenuous man, that these doctrines of the Roman church, which distinguish it from the reformed, were not the doctrines of the primitive church, but are plainly and notoriously contrary to the best antiquity: though they are very apt to brag of that upon all occasions, yet how little they esteem it, and how conscious they are to themselves that it is not for their purpose, and that it is truly against them, I shall by some general remarks unquestionably demonstrate, and make them, if they have any shame, confess it themselves. And

First, What mean their *expurgatory indices*, whereby they have corrected so many fathers, and blotted out and expunged so many sentences out of the writings of the most ancient doctors of the church, and by new editions made them speak contrary to themselves in so many places of their works, if they were not sensible that those ancient authors, who bring down to us the doctrine of the primitive church, were in many things witnesses against them, and bore evident testimonies against their new opinions? This is so plain a confession that antiquity is against them, and renders them so much self-condemned, that they intended to have kept these indices very private, and it was only by chance that we came to the first knowledge of them. Our learned king, James I. has acquainted the world with the mystery of them, as he calls it; but it is so plain a mystery of iniquity, that it needs nothing to discover the fraud and villany of it. To raze ancient records, is a crime of the highest nature; and they who are guilty of it (as the church of Rome is in the greatest degree), by thus purging and correcting the fathers, by an inquisition the most cruel of any other, and that appointed by the council of Trent, need no other proof to convict them, that that cause which stands in need of such arts is not to be defended without them; and this is such a note of a church, that it brands and stigmatizes it with another mark than that of antiquity.

2. Besides the correcting, or rather corrupting of so many fathers, which were genuine monuments of antiquity, the counterfeiting of

so many false ones, and obtruding of so many spurious authors upon the world, is a plain evidence of the want of true antiquity. This is like the suborning of witnesses, which is enough to make all the world suspect, that what they are brought for, and what they depose, is not true; it is no other than forging old writings and instruments to help out the known weakness of a cracked title. Thus the *Decretal Epistles* were counterfeited to prop up the pope's *spiritual* power, and *Constantine's Donation* to establish his *temporal*. The cheat of the first was so evident, from the style being so sordid and so unlike that of those ages, and yet being so like itself in all parts as showed it to have throughout but one author, that though they were formerly made use of, and did great service, yet they are now laid by as too gross to be owned by most of the learned men of that church; and the other, though it be still defended by some of them, yet has such marks of forgery, as makes most of them confess it. But there are great numbers of forged and spurious authors, whose testimonies are still produced by these writers, for those doctrines and opinions which are destitute of true antiquity, a collection of which is given us by our king James, in his *Bastardy of the False Fathers*; and all those critics who have written censures upon the fathers' works, cannot but own it. I cannot charge this upon any public act of the church, like that of purging and correcting the fathers; but most of the writers who bring such large and false musters of the fathers, are guilty of it, and particularly some of their late books amongst us.* We have a very great and early instance of this notorious way of forgery in the very head and governors of that church; and that was in falsifying the Nicene canons, and thrusting in a canon of a *particular synod* among those of a *general council*, thereby to claim a power of *appeals* to themselves; which was such an imposture as shows what some men will do to gain power and authority over other churches, and what an unfaithful preserver a church may be, that pretends to be infallible, not only of oral tradition, but even of writings too, for they had copies without question of the council of Nice: and if the other great churches of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, had not had authentic and agreeing copies to the contrary, the churches of Africa had been

* Consensus Veterum; Nubes Testium.

run down by one of the most palpable forgeries in the world, and the church of Rome would, no doubt, have made a great deal more use of it afterwards than upon that particular occasion. But,

3. Though antiquity is to be sometimes suppressed and stifled, that it may say nothing against Romanists, and sometimes suborned and counterfeited, that it may bear false witness for them; and though they generally make a fair show, and a great noise with the pretence of it, yet they cannot but often betray the little esteem and regard which they have for it. Thus, to give an instance or two: in the famous question of the Virgin's immaculate conception, though the fathers are acknowledged to be generally against it, and their own Bishop Canus* reckons up St. Ambrose, St. Austin, St. Chrysostom, and a great many more, who expressly assert "her being conceived in original sin," and says, "that this is the unanimous opinion of all the fathers who happen to make mention of it,"† yet he declares "this to be a very weak and infirm argument which is drawn from the *authority of all the fathers*, and that, notwithstanding this authority, the contrary opinion is piously and probably maintained and defended in the church;"‡ and Bellarmine says, "they are not to be reckoned among catholics,"§ who are of another opinion; though this opinion, it seems, was that of all antiquity. Thus at other times Bellarmine shifts off the authority of St. Cyprian, when he plainly opposes that of the pope, and says, "that he mortally erred and offended in so doing;"|| and concerning Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and others, "their opinion, (he says,) cannot be defended from great error;"¶ *i. e.* when it is against his own: thus also of St. Jerome, "he was of that opinion; but it is false, and shall be

* De Sanctorum Auctoritate, lib. vii. loc. Theolog. cap. 1. Lovan.

† "Sancti namque omnes, qui in ejus rei mentionem incidere, uno ore asseruerunt, beatam Virginem in peccato originali conceptam, hoc vid. Ambros. hoc August. hoc Chrysost." &c. *Ib.*

‡ "Infirmum tamen ex omnium autoritate argumentum ducitur, quin potius contraria sententia et probabiliter et piè in ecclesia defenditur." *Ib.*

§ "Inter Catholicos non sunt numerandi." BELLARM. *de Amis. Grat.* lib. iv. cap. 15.

|| "Videtur mortaliter peccasse." BELLARM. lib. iv. *de Rom. Pont.* cap. 7.

¶ "Eorum sententiam non video quo pacto ab errore possumus defendere." BELLARM. *de Beat.* § lib. i. cap. 6.

refuted.”* And to mention no more, (though Romanists stick not upon all occasions to slight and condemn antiquity, when it will not make for them,) Baronius, one of their greatest searchers into antiquity, but as great a corrupter of it, who had taken that oath, I suppose, prescribed by Pope Pius IV. not to receive or expound Scripture but according to the uniform consent of the fathers, yet doth unwarily, but ingenuously confess, that “the holy fathers, whom for their great learning we justly call the doctors of the church, yet the catholic (that is Roman) church doth not always follow, nor in all things, in the interpretation of Scripture.”† They can go off, it seems, from their oath, and from the fathers too, when they think fit; they are not always bound to keep so close to antiquity, as they give out at other times, and pretend they do. But in the last place :

4. The determinations and decrees of the *present* church are the only things they stick to, and it is the authority and infallibility of that which they rely more upon, and a thousand times more regard, than all antiquity, or the whole sense of the *primitive* church. They pretend, indeed, not to determine any thing contrary either to Scripture, or to the primitive church, but they make themselves the only judges of both; they tell us they make no new doctrines, no innovations in faith, but they keep to themselves the power of declaring what doctrines are new, and what are not; and then I can see little difference between their *making*, and their *declaring* new articles of faith, since it is their *declaring* of doctrines that makes them to be believed and received as such, when they were not to be so before; and how then does that differ from *making* them articles of faith? Bellarmine speaks plainly out, though against his own note, when he says, “The church of latter time hath power not only to explain and declare, but constitute and command those things which belong to faith.”‡ If the present church has a power to make more doctrines and articles be

* “Videtur Hieronymus in ea sententia fuisse, sed falsa est et suo loco refellenda.” BELLARM. *de Pontif. Rom.* lib. i. cap. 8.

† “Nam sanctissimos patres, quos doctores ecclesiæ ob illorum sublimem eruditionem merito nominamus, in interpretatione Scripturarum non semper ac in omnibus catholica ecclesia sequitur.” *Baron. Annal. Eccles.* an. 34. n. 213. p. 218. Colon.

‡ Tract. de Potest. Sum. Pontif.

believed as necessary to salvation than were believed by the primitive church; then it may make additions to the christian faith, and make that necessary to be believed at one time, which was not at another. If it has not this power, let them declare it, and not count others heretics who receive all the ancient creeds, and hold the faith of all the ancient councils, and believe all those doctrines that the whole primitive church, in all places, and at all times, ever held. Here, with Lirinensis, we fix our feet; and here we resolve to stand and keep our ground, and not be moved with every wind of doctrine that shall blow out of a new quarter, which would maintain that a small part of the *present* church shall declare that to be an article of faith, which was never so declared by the *primitive*. To say that they have made no new articles of faith in their church, but only the same articles made *explicit* (unfolded), which were *implicit* (infolded) before, in the primitive church, is as if they should say, there are no new men in the world since Adam or Noah, but only the same men that were before *implicit* in their loins, are now *explicitly* born into the world. Thus the church, though it be ever so fruitful in producing doctrines and articles of faith that never were before in the church, yet makes nothing new; and however spurious its doctrines may be, and however degenerating from the faith of our forefathers, yet it must be said to be of the same kind and species. Faith, it seems from the Romish doctrine, in the primitive church was but an embryo, or like a small seed or kernel, implicitly containing all the parts entire, but in little; but when it is grown up and enlarged by the explicit declaration of the church, then it may swell into a mighty bigness, and increase even into the largest *Tridentine* bulk, and be it ever so unlike the former, yet it must be called the same still. But if this implicit faith was sufficient for the primitive church, why may it not be so for the present, and what need have we of a more explicit faith to save us now, than they had to save them then? All the essential articles of christian faith are to be explicitly believed at all times, and it is strange that we must be now obliged to profess more explicit faith, and a more implicit obedience, than the primitive church was ever acquainted with. But after all, I hope those doctrines that are contrary to the doctrines of the primitive church, were not then implicitly believed

by it; and if they were not, I am sure most of the doctrines of the Roman church, as different from the reformed, were not her implicit doctrines. But unless error may be folded up with truth, and one part of a contradiction may be involved in the other, the late corruptions and decrees of the Roman church, in her Trent articles, were no way contained in the quite different doctrines of the primitive church. And thus, because I have gone too far with this discourse, I must abruptly take leave of Bellarmine, and his church, though I resolve, by God's grace, to keep always to this his true Note of the Church, and therefore to that church in which I am, which is the most agreeable to the primitive of any in the world, both as to its doctrine, and every thing else.

THE
SEVENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;

VIZ.

THE UNION OF THE MEMBERS,

AMONG THEMSELVES, AND WITH THE HEAD.*

BY DR. CLAGETT.

THE church, as the Cardinal observes, is called in the Scriptures, “one body, one spouse, one sheepfold.” But he that infers from hence, that unity is a proper mark of the true church, ought to be very well assured, that the head and members are united nowhere but in the body of Christ, and that the *harlot* cannot be *one* as well as the *spouse*, &c. But the world has hitherto been persuaded, that bare unity is a character to be found upon societies of different natures and contrary designs; that of itself it infers neither good nor evil, and may belong to a body of rebels, no less than to an army of loyal subjects. Unity is then indeed a good mark, when it is a duty; as it is a duty when the terms of union are so. For which reason, the union of the church is of all others the most excellent, because all men ought to follow that truth and goodness which are necessary to salvation; and these are best preserved and maintained by union amongst those who follow them: for which reasons also it is celebrated in the gospel with variety of expressions. But to argue from hence, that the union of members among themselves, and with their head, is

* “Septima nota est unio membrorum, inter se et cum capite.”—BELLAR.
de Notis Ecclesiæ. lib. iv. cap. 10.

a proper note of the true church, is just as if I should conclude, upon seeing a thousand men marching in good order, and with equal pace after their leader, that therefore of necessity they must be going to York.

Notwithstanding therefore this argument from unity being attributed to the church, the Cardinal did not think fit to leave his note or mark so very loose and common, but slips into the mention of those things wherein the unity of the church consists, as he pretends. He tells us that the head with which the members are united is the pope. And as for their union among themselves, he afterwards proves that all catholics must needs agree in all points of faith, "since they all submit their own sense to the sense of one and the same chief pastor, guiding the church from the chair of Peter, with the advice of other pastors:" So that now we know what he means by the union of the members to their head, and among themselves; that is to say, "The union of the members of the Roman church to the pope as to their head, and their union among themselves in believing all that he teaches from the chair of St. Peter," &c.

This note does, for its part, make good what was observed at first, concerning the general design of these notes, which is not so much to describe to us the proper characters of a true christian church, as to prove that the church of Rome is the only true church. Whatever the Cardinal insinuated at first, he seemed to be very sensible, that the union of members with the head, and among themselves, was too large a note to fit no other society but a true christian church. Now if in restraining his note he had understood Christ by the head; and by the union of the members to one another, he understood an agreement in the faith that was once delivered to the saints; this indeed would have served for the finding out of a true church: but then this was too large for the Cardinal's purpose, which was to find no other church to be *true* but the *Roman*. And therefore by the head it was necessary to understand the pope, and by the union of the members, an agreement in all that doctrine which is taught by the Roman church. For it was to be hoped that this would mark all the Roman communion *in*, but it would most undoubtedly mark all other Christians *out* of the only true church. For this is the admirable reasoning to which it

leads: that is the true church which acknowledges the pope for its head, and for its faith professes the doctrine, whatever it be, that is taught in the church of Rome; and from hence it must needs follow, that the church of Rome is the only true church. Quod erat demonstrandum; which was the point to be proved.

And if the Cardinal had left the matter thus, he had, in my mind, done better for his church, and his reasoning had been less exceptionable than he has made it in the pursuance of his enlargements. When a man has to do with an untractable piece of matter, it often happens, that the more he strives to fashion it to his own purpose, the more he misses his aim. And so this great man, by labouring to make this his mark of unity utterly unserviceable to any other church, has given it that figure at last which makes it unfit for his own, as we shall see.

For I shall endeavour to make out these three things:

I. That the unity here offered is no true note of the church.

II. That if it were, yet the Roman church has it not.

III. That that unity which is indeed a note of the church *we* have, and that in a much greater degree than *they*.

I. That the unity here offered is no true note of the church; which I shall show concerning both his instances of it.

And *first, concerning union with the pope as head of the church*; that this should be a note of the church, is a pretence that hath neither scripture, reason, nor antiquity for it, but all against it.

1. For *scripture*: the Cardinal offers no proof from thence of his assumption, which yet would have been very requisite to a point of so vast a consequence, if the scripture had afforded any testimony to his purpose.

That the pope should be head of the church and the centre of its unity—that union under him should be an essential character of the church, and that the very being of it should depend upon him, but that scripture should not give us the least intimation of it, is a thing so perfectly unaccountable, that the very silence of scripture, in a matter of this high nature, is to us a sufficient argument, that the apostles knew nothing of any such constitution.

Especially, since they did not forget to make plain and frequent mention of another Head of the church, to which all the members are to be united, viz. our Lord Jesus Christ. They tell us, “That

when God raised him from the dead, he gave him to be *head* over all things to the church, which is *his body*.”* That “as they are members in one body, so we being many, are *one body in Christ*.”† That “as the body is one and hath many members . . . so also is Christ;” *i. e.* Christ and the church, the whole being denominated from the head, for we “are the *body of Christ*.”‡ We are told “that he is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body is fitly joined together,”§ &c. That he is “the head of the church, and the saviour of the body.”|| That he “is the head of the body the church.”¶ And much more to this purpose might be added. Now when the church is so frequently declared to be one body, and to this one body one head is so frequently assigned, and no more; what use can any man, who is not possessed with prejudice, make of this, but that there is no other head of the church besides Him who is so often mentioned as such, and that by the same reason, that any man goes about to add another head to the church, he might, if he pleased, find out another church for the head: nor does it help them at all that they pretend the pope to be but the *vicarious and ministerial* head of the church; since, if without union to him we are out of the church, and have no part in Christ, it was necessary that this pretended vicarious head should have been as plainly and frequently expressed, as we know the true and real head to have been.

Nay, it was *more* necessary, since a very slender intimation might have been sufficient to assure us, that “He, who is the image of the invisible God, by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist, is also the head of the body of the church:”*** that “He, in whom we have redemption through his blood,”†† who is the saviour of the body, and for our sakes humbled himself to the death of the cross, should be also the *head of the body*, and be exalted to be head over all things to his church; *He*, I say, in whom infinite power and goodness met. But that there should be another head given to the whole church, to be united to which was no less necessary than union to Christ himself; and that this catholic head should be no other than a sinful

* Eph. i. 20, 22, 23.

† Rom. xii. 4, 5.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.

§ Eph. iv. 16.

|| Eph. iv. 23.

¶ Col. i. 18.

*** Col. i. 15, 18.

†† Col. i. 14.

man, and he very often none of the best, was so far removed from self-evidence, or even probability, that it certainly needed very express mention, if not frequent inculcation. Now that he should be frequently mentioned as head of the church, who in comparison needed not to be mentioned at all; and that no mention should be made of another head of the church that needs very much to be so mentioned; is a point for them to give an account of, who make union to this *later* head no less necessary to a part in the body of Christ, than union to the *former* is.

This account will be much harder to be given, inasmuch as there is no mention at all of this pretended head, where there was the most fair and inviting occasion for it that can be well imagined. Thus St. Paul showing what gifts Christ bestowed upon his church after his ascension, saith, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ . . . and that we might grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* Now here we do not only find our Saviour represented as the head of his church, and us as the members of his body, but that amongst the several subordinate members of which his body consists, there is no mention of that most necessary member of all, (if I may call it a member,) the vicarious head of the church. For it is not said that he gave first Peter to be head of his church, and then apostles, &c.; but he gave, first, some apostles, and those not as *heads* of his church, but as *principal members* of it. And in the beginning of the same chapter, where he describes the unity of the church, he says, there is "one body, and one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all."

Now I would fain know whether the Cardinal would have omitted here "one visible head of the church, in which all ought to be united." And then let any man tell me why St. Paul did. He had the like occasion in another place, where having said much concerning the unity of the body of Christ, "Ye are, (saith he,) the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers,"* &c. Now, I say, if this visible head of unity

* Eph. iv. 11, 12, &c.

had been elsewhere mentioned ever so often, he ought not to have been omitted in any of these three places ; much less if he were mentioned nowhere else. But no notice being taken of this head elsewhere, nor here either, is little less than a demonstration, that there was no such head to be taken notice of.

When any one shall pretend to so high a prerogative, and require such vast dependence as this implies, we may in reason expect he should be able to produce some very good evidence of his right to it ; and therefore the mere general silence of the Scripture is *prejudice* enough against the pretence. But the silence of the Scripture, in *such* places as I have produced, is a direct *argument* against it.

Nay, lastly, Scripture is so far from giving the least intimation of any such *headship*, where the mention of it was unavoidable if it had been a divine constitution, that it seems expressly to oppose it. For St. Paul, speaking against those contentions which happened, by one saying, “ I am of Paul,” another, “ I am of Apollos,” a third, “ I am of Cephas,” does not oppose Cephas, or Peter, to the rest, as if it were lawful for them to say, “ I am of Peter,” though not, “ I am of Paul,” &c. but utterly reprobates *all* such distinctions, and requires them all to be united in Christ. “ Is Christ divided ?” says he ; “ Was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?” plainly showing, that to establish any mortal man as the centre of union in the christian church, is in effect to divide the authority of Christ ; and that if we unite ourselves in such a head, we may as well be baptized in his name, and have him for our Saviour too.

2. As little foundation is there in *reason* for this headship of the pope over the whole body of Christ, since it will necessarily require that all the christian churches in the world, even those that are at greatest distance from one another, be reduced under his government, and depend upon his authority ; the administration of which vast power and trust is impossible to any mortal man. Being vested in a wise and good man, it could be but of little benefit to a body so diffusive as the catholic church ; but in the hands of a weak or vicious person, it would become the instrument of pride, tyranny, oppression, and divisions. A small

* Cor. xii. 27, 28.

bishopric requires the utmost care and prudence to manage it aright, but what ability, without a miracle, could be sufficient for a tolerable discharge of so great a trust, as the inspection and government of the whole church from one end of the earth to the other? The temptations to abuse such power would be infinite, and the abuses themselves intolerable, and hardly capable of redress; as we see by no small experience. For after that power was pretended to at Rome, and submitted to by the Western church, the scandals and miseries of this part of Christendom grew to such an extremity, that it could not be dissembled; insomuch that the cardinals and prelates appointed by Pope Paul III. to advise concerning the state of the church, assured him, that “she was just falling headlong into ruin;”* and that the chief cause was, that the pope’s will and pleasure had been the rule of all his doings. And he that shall consider what a lewd and filthy place Rome itself was grown, by their own confession, may observe from thence, how likely it is that the government of the catholic church should thrive in the hands of persons quickly succeeding one another, who are too busy to attend upon the reformation of most scandalous and crying disorders at home.

3. Neither is there any colour in antiquity for this headship of the pope, although they are the primitive fathers upon whose authority chiefly they would support this usurpation. The testimonies which the Cardinal has chosen for his purpose, are so far from it, that one would wonder to see so weighty a superstructure laid upon so weak a foundation. Thus, because St. Irenæus says that “every church, *i. e.* the faithful who are all about, must needs resort to the Roman church, because of the most powerful principality;” *i. e.* because the imperial city drew the business of the world to itself, and by consequence, Christians in all parts had occasion to resort to it; therefore the bishop of that city was the head of all churches in the world. Because St. Cyprian called the Roman “*the principal church*, from whence the unity of the priests did arise, and the matrix and root of the catholic church;” therefore he could mean nothing else, but that union to the bishop of Rome is absolutely necessary to a *part* in Christ and his church: whereas it is most evident, that elsewhere he did

* Consil. de Emend. Eccl. in Richer. lib. iv.

freely assert the *independence* of *other bishops* against that bishop, and of *other episcopal churches* against that church ; and consequently, that he called it the *principal church*, as being constituted in the *principal city* (so Rigaltius acknowledgeth) ; and the spring of sacerdotal unity, and the root of the catholic church, because bishops having occasion either to come up to Rome, or to send thither from all parts, did by their unity with the church there manifestly declare their union to one another, which was a convenience accruing to that church (and to all others) from the imperial city in which it was constituted ; but by no means inferring that other churches were more obliged to union with her, than she with others. Again, because it was *sometimes* a mark of an orthodox and catholic Christian to be joined in communion with the Roman bishop ; therefore, must it *always* be so, and can it never happen that a man should be united to the church, and disjoined from the pope ? Because St. Jerome referred himself to the chair of Peter when Damasus sate in it ; therefore would he have done the same to his predecessor Liberius, after he had communicated with the Arians ? Of the same kind is the argument from Optatus. Finally, because St. Augustine thought that Cecilian had reason to value his communion with the Roman church, more than the multitude of his enemies, inasmuch as the principality of an apostolical chair had always flourished there ; therefore, is the bishop of Rome head of the church ? As if there were no other apostolical chair besides that at Rome ; and as if the communion of no other church was to be esteemed, when a bishop meets with unreasonable opposition, but one that is by virtue of her chair mistress of all the rest ! For what he says out of St. Augustine in *Psal. contra partem Donati*, has had its answer. Pope Leo indeed speaks a little more to the purpose, but without any authority, as being a witness in his own cause. For it was but a few years before, that Zosimus, Boniface, and Celestin, had set up a small pretence to a universal headship, though nothing was got by it, but a notable rebuke from the African fathers, of whom St. Augustine was one, for introducing a worldly pride into the church. But no wonder if those popes that followed, still kept their eye upon that power which their predecessors could not as yet compass.

On the other side, it appears, by most unquestionable evidence, that the primitive fathers knew no greater necessity of being united to the Roman, than to any other catholic or orthodox bishop. When Pope Victor took upon him to excommunicate the Arian churches, for not observing Easter as the Roman did, they were so far from thinking a union with him as their head necessary to their being members of the catholic church, that they called a synod of their own, reprehended the pope's arrogance, and resolved to adhere to their own custom. St. Cyprian, Firmilian, and the Africans, did the like, in opposition to Pope Stephen; Firmilian* plainly telling them, that while he thought to excommunicate all them from himself, he had but excommunicated himself from them. In ancient times there was no shadow of any such headship in the pope, as of late ages has been contended for. He was treated with no other titles of respect than other bishops were, who were called popes and vicars of Christ no less than he, as he was by them styled their colleague and brother, no less than they by him. In respect of presidency over *particular* churches, his jurisdiction was confined as well as theirs; in respect of the common care of the *whole* church, each of them was deemed to have an authority and a trust no way inferior to his: all which our adversaries do full well understand, who are, though ever so little, conversant in St. Cyprian, if they would but speak what they know. But because St. Jerome's complaint to Damasus is insisted upon by the Cardinal, let St. Jerome be heard speaking to this very point so clearly, that we cannot desire he should have been more express: "Wherever," saith he, "there is a bishop, whether at Rome, or at Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Thanis; he is of the same worth, and of the same priesthood. The advantage of wealth, and the disadvantage of poverty, does not make a bishop to be higher or lower; but they are all successors of the apostles."† To conclude this point, popes have been anciently censured, condemned, and excommunicated, when they were thought to have deserved it. Julius was excommunicated by the eastern bishops; Liberius anathematized by St. Hilary; Vigilius excommunicated by the

* Apud Cypr. Ep. 75, p. 228. Edit. Oxon.

† Hier. ad Evagr. Ep. 85.

Africans ; Honorius condemned by the sixth general council.* Did these fathers take the pope for their common head, and the centre of catholic union ?

Some popes have been heretics, as the Romanists themselves cannot deny ; and therefore there has been a time when it was so far from being a note of the catholic church to be united to the pope, that it was impossible so to be without separation from the catholic church.

But the Cardinal has a very notable argument to prove the necessity of this union ; viz. *experience* : “ Since those churches have withered away that are divided from this head, the pope, witness the Asiatic and African churches, anciently famous for numerous councils, for learned and holy men, but since their schism from the Roman church, reduced to obscurity, and plunged into gross ignorance.”

To which it might be enough to answer, that although where the sin is flagrant, and beyond controversy, there the calamity that befalls the offender, may, without breach of charity, or impious intrusion into the counsels of Providence, be well deemed the effect of God’s justice ; yet in a dispute about right and truth, to take advantage from the afflictions of a man, or of a church, and to make them an argument against the oppressed side, is barbarously uncharitable and wicked, and becomes none but those who care not by what means they effect their purpose.

But not to pry into the secrets of Divine Providence ; might it not have served the Cardinal’s turn to assign the afflictions and ignorance of those churches to the irruptions of their enemies upon them, who at length prevailed, and utterly destroyed some of them, and to this day hold the rest in slavery ? If this be not enough ; what if one should add, that their not uniting themselves to the pope, was indeed one cause of their misfortunes, as he had much rather see those ancient and glorious churches laid waste by infidels, than saved by the united arms of Christendom, lest they should make a vigorous opposition to his claims of supremacy ?

However, it is not more certain that they were once the most flourishing churches in Christendom, than that when they were

* See Vindication of the Answers to some late Papers.

so, they did not acknowledge this union to the bishop of Rome as the head of the catholic church; nay, that they opposed the beginnings and preparations to so unjust a claim; and therefore their denying it at present, can with no reason be alleged as the cause of their distress.

One thing more we have to say to this doughty argument: how comes it to pass that we have a contrary experience in churches nearer home, which have not fallen into decay, by separating from the pope? We are apt to think, that from the Reformation to this day, there have been as many persons eminent both for piety and learning in the church of England, as any age ever produced in any nation. That we are not sunk into "gross ignorance," our adversaries know by some experience. And we may say, without need of blushing for the matter, that they have felt some learning from this church, which their union to the pope hath of late helped very few of them to.

And if we may conclude any thing from the examples of those within their own communion, we shall find that the more closely any of them are united to this supposed head, their piety and learning does not flourish one jot the more for it. Let the learning of the Gallican church be compared with that of Spain or Italy; let the piety of the regulars, especially of the Jesuits, be weighed with that of the secular clergy; and I believe it will appear, that this union is no such excellent advantage, either towards piety or learning, that they should appeal to experience to show the necessity thereof, either to the one or the other. And thus much for their union to the pope.

Secondly. Neither is the union which they pretend to among themselves, as members, any certain note of the church.

The Cardinal was not content to describe their union, by "thinking the same concerning all doctrines of faith;" but will have it to exclude also discord and dissension, and falling into sects and parties. For since he denies such union to be found amongst pagans and heretics, he must be supposed to affirm it of the members of his church, if he talks to any purpose. Now admitting it were so:

(1.) This is no more than what any society may have as well as the true church; and any other church as well as the Roman.

The members of every church are thus far united, that they all agree in professing the common belief of the society to which they belong. But about other doctrines they either fall into dissension, or not, as it happens. And for some considerable time they may agree very well, and at length fall out. In which case, according to Bellarmine's note, they would be the true church while they agreed, whatever their faith should be, which is most absurd. It is not whether men are united among themselves in what they believe, but whether that wherein they are united be the right faith, that is to be considered. Union in a false way is a confederacy in error; and the more that men are united in it, the more wise or prudent they may show themselves to be, but never the more orthodox. And though the Cardinal produces that saying of our Saviour—"Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation,"* to show that discord is a sign of the kingdom of the devil; yet he has manifestly perverted the place, inasmuch as our Saviour's discourse there proceeds upon the contrary supposition, viz. that *Satan is not divided against himself*.

(2.) As there may be this union out of the true church, so it may not be within it; which makes it plain that this is no certain note of the church. It is undeniable that there were divisions in the first apostolical churches; and, consequently, it is clear that to be members of the catholic church, it is sufficient that in those things wherein the *unity of the faith* consists all speak the same thing.

And if the Cardinal meant that the breaking of a church into parties, and the rise of heresies and schisms out of it, is a certain note of a false church; he might as well have said, that there never was a true church in the world, no not in the apostles' times. And if for this reason he would unchurch the protestants, he did in effect put as good an argument as this against the Reformation, into the mouth of a Turk or a Jew against Christianity, that there is no truth in it at all: and because Christians are so divided against one another, therefore are none of them in the right? For a more particular consideration of this argument, I refer the reader to the Apologetical Vindication of the Church of England.

* Matt. xii.

Thus much for the first part of this discourse, which was to show "that the unity here offered, is not a note of the church." I proceed to show,

II. "That if it were, yet the Roman church has it not." Which is probably true of the first, and most certainly true of the second branch of the Cardinal's unity.

1. It is probable that the Roman church wants the first, and that there is now no true pope, or has been for many ages, for that church to be united to. For by their own confession, a pope simoniacally chosen, a pope intruded by violence, a heretic, nay more, an atheist or an infidel, is no true pope. And many such there have been, of one sort or other, whose acts, therefore, in creating Cardinals, &c. being invalid, it is exceedingly probable that the whole succession has upon this account failed long ago. Besides, there have been about twenty-five schisms in the church of Rome, the last of which continued no less than fifty years, wherein two, and sometimes three popes pretended to St. Peter's chair—created Cardinals—had their several parties and abettors, &c. During which schisms, it would be madness to say that the Roman church was united to the pope, as head, when they were all together by the ears, to see which of the anti-Popes was the true one? Now while there was no certain Pope, there could be no certainty of the validity of any acts necessary to continue a succession of true Popes. But this case having happened so often, and sometimes continued for many years, the uncertainty must have at last grown into an utter improbability that they have a Pope, and therefore (according to the Cardinal) that they are a church; unless it be all one whether the church be united with a nominal Pope, or a real Pope; with a true head, or a false head, or any head whatsoever: but,

2. It is undoubtedly true, that the Roman church has not the second branch of unity, viz. that union of the members with one another, which the Cardinal pretends; whether by it he means an union in all points of doctrine of great consequence amongst those who remain in the communion of his pretended catholic church; or such an union of their members as shall prevent the breaking away of some from the communion of the rest.

She has not the former unity. For if philosophers, heretics, &c.

have had their sects and parties, and been at great dissensions among themselves, so have the members of the Roman church too.

He pretends that all "the sacred writers of their church do wonderfully agree." Now to let pass his assumption, in supposing the ancient doctors of the church to be one part of these their writers, we will for the present admit it, and only ask, if they agreed so wonderfully with the fathers, what need there was of an *index expurgatorius* (or suppression of whole passages of their writings) upon these fathers, to make them and the fathers of Trent agree something better?

He pretends that "the decrees of their *lawful* councils agree in *all doctrines*."* Did the councils of Constance and Basil, decreeing that all power, even the Papal, was in things appertaining to religion, to be subject to the council, agree with the abolition of the "Pragmatic Sanction," by the Lateran council, under Leo X., by which the council is made to truckle to the pope? As to this and other instances of the like sort, no help is to be had from that qualification of *lawful* councils; since what the Jesuits will not own to be a lawful council, is by other parties in that church owned to be so. And that church must needs be at wonderful unity within itself, that cannot so much as agree what councils are lawful, and what are not. And yet if they were so agreed, their church unity is not to be bragged of, when there are enough amongst them to make an unlawful council, and to determine in a point of such vast consequence as that above-mentioned, otherwise than they ought to do. For if in the same communion, one council determines one way, and another the contrary way, that communion cannot be said to agree the more for one being a lawful, and the other an unlawful council.

Whereas he pretends that the decrees of Popes are also at unity with one another, one would expect that in the next place fire and water should be brought in for an example of agreement too: for they may be made to agree, as soon as the decrees of many Popes. Leo † and Gelasius condemned the receiving of the sacrament in one kind: have there been no Popes since who condemned the contrary? Nicholas IV. ‡ determined that Christ was a beggar, and

* In omnibus Dogmatibus inter se conveniunt.

† De Consecr. Dist. 2, cap. 12.

‡ Extravag. Joh. tit. 14, cap. 4.

had right to nothing; but John XXII., who comes not long after him, makes it heretical to say so. It has been so frequent a practice for Popes to overthrow the decrees of their predecessors, that it were endless to recount the particulars.

As for the writers which they may justly claim to themselves, how Bellarmine should come to fancy such a wonderful agreement among them, is very strange, since in his own controversies he has observed so many notable differences amongst them. Was it not Bellarmine who observed that several catholic writers have agreed with the heretics* in asserting the council to be above the Pope? And that as those did not agree with themselves, so neither did the other side of canonists and schoolmen that asserted the contrary? And this is no trifling question either. Such disagreement is noted by the same Cardinal upon other material points, viz. concerning the pope's temporal power;—whether vows of single life are dispensable;—what worship may be given to images;—whether images of God may be made or not;—whether extreme unction, and other of their sacraments, were instituted by Christ;—whether intention be necessary to a sacrament;—whether an express purpose of forsaking sin be necessary to contrition;—whether good works be truly meritorious. And so has he observed concerning many more questions, in most of which some or other of themselves have held as protestants do, against the rest of their church.

Not to insist upon the disputes between the Thomists, the Scotists, and the Occamists, which were not all about trifles; the question between the Dominicans and Franciscans about the conception of the Virgin, was by themselves esteemed of such consequence, that there have been revelations about it against revelations, and if we will believe them, miracles against miracles; to which we may add, the flaming contentions between the Jansenists and the Molinists,† both which grew to such a height, that it has been all along almost as dangerous to the interest of the Roman church, to let their controversies go on, as to go about to decide them. I confess the divinity of the new methodists, the French expositor, and the English representer, has as yet occasioned but little disturbance in that communion, for which

* De Concil. lib. ii. cap. 14, et alibi.

† See Veteres Vindicat. c. 10.

I know a good reason. But this I will say, that if their *new popery* can in all points be received with the old,* I do not see but from this time forward their unity may be inviolable, now that they have got the knack of making contradictions agree with one another.

But to all such instances as these, Bellarmine hath supplied them with a ready answer—"That they differ not in those things that belong to faith;" upon which cautious answer one would be apt to inquire, how nearly a question in religion must be *allied* to the faith, before it may be said to *belong* to it.

The Cardinal himself tells us now and then of something held by catholics that is *fere hæreticum*, as he calls it, *almost heretical*, in which case the question should be also *almost of faith*, and may be said to *belong* to it. But if he means simply that "they all agree in matters of faith," as he says afterwards, and that "all catholics say the same thing about doctrines of faith," as we were told before, we are willing to hear him; but then we expect that the church of England, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists, should be heard too, when to the papists charging them with *some differences*, they make the same answer, that they have all the same faith, especially since, when they come to prove the truth of what they say, they will show that the matters wherein they differ do not break the unity of the catholic faith; which is something a better argument than the Cardinal produces for the unity of his party in matters of faith, viz. that they all "profess to believe that which shall be judged necessary to be believed in the Roman-catholic church." For to say no more to this at present, notwithstanding this profession, we are very sure that some of them take those things to be matters of faith, which others do not, if we may believe them, of which the *infallibility of the Pope*, and the *deposing doctrine*, are notorious and undeniable instances.

But now, if by the union of the members should be meant such a union as will hinder the separation of some from the rest, then this note must not by any means be pretended to in the church of Rome, from which so many churches that once were in communion with her, have broken away. Indeed he does not expressly say that he means this by the union of the members among themselves;

* See Defence of the Exp. of the Doctrine of the Church of England, p. 90.

but some such thing he must mean, or else by virtue of this note he does impertinently run down the Lutherans as being heretics, because they have begotten so many sects, which, as he pretends, charge each other with heresy. And then it may as truly be said that the church of Rome, in whose communion we were before the Reformation, wants the mark of unity, because so many have broken away from her; as that any other churches want it, because some have also divided from them. For it is very idle to say, that though we were members of that church when we first began to differ from it, yet that by our divisions we cut ourselves from her communion, and therefore that the unity of her communion is not affected by our departure. For thus we may as well excuse all the separations from ours or from any other church, viz. that by separating from us, they no longer belong to us. We are very confident, that in all points of doctrine, of any moment, we of the church of England do agree much more together, than those of the church of Rome; and as for them who have gone out from us, they as little break the unity of the rest whom they are gone from, as Luther's departing from the church of Rome broke the unity of those who still remained in it. So that either the church of Rome must renounce her pretence to unity, made upon this account, that sects and parties have not broken away from her; or she must set up this wise note of the true church, that all her members are united, except those that are divided from her, which is a mark that will fit any society in the world.

But the Cardinal does here offer a difference between the division of heretics from the church, and a division on account of heresy; "that in their church they have a certain rule for ending controversies, viz. the sentence of the chief pastor, or the definition of a general council; and therefore dissension does not arise among them from the doctrine of the church, but from the malice of the devil."

Now in answer to this, not to be importunate with that question, that if these be the ways of compounding controversies, how comes it to pass that their controversies still remain? I would know,

(1.) Why were not these the means of composing those controversies that carried us away from them? Our fathers were

once of their communion, and those means were not sufficient to retain them in it. To say this arose from the malice of the devil, is to say in effect that the devil was in them; which is a little too magisterial for a controvertist, though he were a Cardinal. Unless he resolves to ascribe it to the devil, that they were taken off from an implicit faith in and a blind obedience to the church of Rome: for it seems to be some people's opinion, that when men begin to judge a little for themselves, the spirit of heresy comes in, and then away they go. But from hence I gather, that the sentence of the pope, or of a plenary council, is no certain rule for ending controversies, nor certain means of preventing divisions; if some other means be not used to keep men "from trying the spirits, and proving all things." What they are, the Cardinal knew very well, but mentioned them not, nor shall I need to do it. In the mean time, when whole countries went off from that church as soon as they had a little considered what they had believed upon her authority, I need not say, whether the separation was caused by the doctrine of that church, or by the malice of the devil, but leave the world to judge. But,

(2.) How could those be certain means of composing controversies, concerning which even in their own church there were the greatest controversies of all? What deference is to be given to the sentence of their chief pastor, has always been a great dispute amongst them, and the best, if not the greatest part of their church, do not think him infallible. Nor is it yet agreed among them what is requisite to make the sentence of a general council decisive, nor which of those councils that have contradicted one another they are to follow. And that cannot be a certain rule for deciding controversies, which is itself controverted. So that they have neither that union of members among themselves, nor those certain means of union which they pretend to have.

Which I shall further show from a learned writer of their own, the famous Lauroy,* who, in an elaborate epistle to Nic. Gati-næus, wholly overthrows the pretence in question. For whether or not there be an union in the church of Rome as will serve the Cardinal's turn, I will leave the reader to judge, by this short and faithful account of that epistle.

* Ep. par. 8, p. 353.

First then, he proves unanswerably, by numerous and apposite testimonies of every age, that from the apostle's times till the council of Trent, the constant universal doctrine concerning the church was this, that it is "the society of the faithful," without ever inserting into the definition of it any thing relating to its being united to the pope, or any other bishop, as to a visible head.

Nay, secondly,* that all the most learned lovers of antiquity, and godly opposers of novelty in the Roman communion, both in the time of the council of Trent, and ever since, have retained that notion of the church, and stuck to the ancient definition.

And thirdly,† that Canisius and Bellarmine have egregiously innovated in their doctrine, by adding to the ancient definition such things as are repugnant to all antiquity, and meanwhile that they opposed each other; Canisius making it of the nature of the church to be under *one supreme head*,‡ and giving no place in his definition of it to other governors, to whom the church also is to be united: whereas Bellarmine makes an aristocracy, wherein one is chief, at least a tempered and limited monarchy,§ essential to the church; going in this matter against antiquity, against Canisius, and against himself, inasmuch as he elsewhere makes *antiquity* a note of the true church, and says, "It is a demonstration of the novelty of a doctrine, when the first authors can be named and pointed to;" which is his own case and Canisius's, as to this doctrine.

Launoy reflects upon both of them, for ill logic in these definitions,|| and shows how they destroy each other. He censures the followers of Canisius sharply and judiciously, and then remarks, that though Bellarmine have greater authority among divines, yet Canisius's definition is more generally received; and that for four reasons: "because there is more court flattery in it; because it is put into catechisms, which the other is not, and so sticks by virtue

* Pp. 400—415. † Pp. 415—419.

‡ Uno et summo post Christum capite.

§ "Esse cœtum hominum, &c. colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris vicarii Romani pontificis," (de Eccl. lib. iii. c. 2,)—that it is an assembly of men, &c. bound together under the government of lawful pastors, and chiefly of one, the Roman pontiff, Christ's vicar on earth.

|| Pp. 418—420.

of an early impression; because some men are mad upon novelties; and lastly, others are insufferably ignorant as to the holy Scriptures, and (ancient) tradition, the principles of true theology."

Fourthly, he thinks they have done harm to the church, and that for these reasons: * 1. Because, for want of logic, they have confounded the nature of the church with the state of it. 2. They have neglected St. Paul's direction, of not being tossed to and fro, &c. 3. Are condemned by Tertullian, who bids us adhere to what is first. And 4. By Vincentius Lirinensis. And 5. Have given ill example, by which the reformers can justify themselves. And lastly, they have plainly condemned several popes, and the whole Lateran council under Innocent III., as not sufficiently knowing what the church was, since their notion of it could not content those which came after them: a great injury, and of dangerous consequence."

Lastly, upon a comparison of one with the other, † and of both with the ancient doctrine and discipline of the church: he looks upon Bellarmine's definition as the better of the two, because it may be so mollified by the help of the word *præcipuè*, [chiefly] which is in it, as to admit of a tolerable reconciliation with the definition of the ancients; which, as he shows, can no way agree with that of Canisius.

And upon the whole he concludes, ‡ that however Bellarmine's might be preferable, if either of them were necessary; yet it will be hard for catholics to make their complaints of innovating, which they heap upon heretics, to appear just, so long as they themselves shall retain such a novel definition; and that if Gregory VII.'s rule were observed, viz. "That nothing should be drawn into example or authority, which is contrary to the fathers;" then even this his definition, though it had been received, yet ought to be rejected. To this purpose that "accurate writer," as he is deservedly called by F. Walsh, § has argued to the utter confusion of the Cardinal's argument drawn from union with the pope as head, or from that of the members among themselves.

For how can that be a note of the true church now, which never

* P. 430.

† P. 432, &c.

‡ P. 450.

§ Letter to Bishop of Lincoln, p. 319.

was thought to belong to the nature of it for fifteen hundred years together, and which their own most learned lovers of antiquity, and pious opposers of novelty, do not think essential to it at this day?

And where is the so much boasted consent of the members amongst themselves, in all matters of faith?

“I believe the holy catholic church,” is an article of faith. I would know of those gentlemen who are at such perfect agreement amongst themselves, what this church is? Bellarmine answers one thing, Canisius another, so contrary, that if one speaks true, the other must needs have told me that which is false. And while the definition of the former is followed by some, and that of the latter, which is worse, is more generally received, Launoy, and many more of the learned sort, stick to the ancients, who are as different from both, as both are from one another. And yet after all we must be told, that they are perfectly agreed in all matters of faith; and that this invisible unintelligible union shows plainly, that the Roman is the true church! One would hardly think that they are in earnest; unless by union they mean an equal resolution to carry on the dispute as long as they can contend, and no longer, which kind of union is to be met with almost every term in Westminster-hall; where one may see two parties prosecuting one another with all imaginable vigour, who yet resolve to be quiet when the bench has made them so. Not that the party who is cast in the suit must needs change his opinion of his own cause, because the last verdict was against him, but that if a new trial will not be granted, he is bound to acquiesce in the judgment of the court, because it has a sheriff, with the *posse comitatus*, to put it into execution. Thus they that make the sentence of the pope, and they that make the sentence of a council, the sentence of the church, are united in a resolution to stand by the arbitrement of the church; there being a certain sensible obligation upon them to profess, that they will acquiesce in its determination: but in the mean time they may undoubtedly quarrel amongst themselves about questions of such mighty importance as that we mentioned even now, and this without breach of union amongst themselves, till the sentence of the pope, or the sentence of a plenary council, or the sentence of both, comes to part them; which yet will be long enough first, if each side of

the question be abetted with numerous and able parties, that are at present both of them resolved to submit absolutely to the church, lest one of them, upon an unseasonable sentence, should be provoked to change its resolution. And thus, as we observed before, the question about the *immaculate conception* has been left undecided so long, lest by determining that, a more dangerous question should be raised by the disobliged party. But if it should so happen that the church cannot well avoid declaring herself in such a case, this new-fashioned union goes forward still, though she speaks so ambiguously, that each party fancies the sentence to be on its own side; which was done often at Trent with great application and art, particularly in the decrees concerning *grace*, and *assurance of being justified*, &c. Which being finished, Soto and Vega differed not only as much, but something more than they did at first; for now they had a new question to debate, viz. "on which side the council had decreed;" and so they fell to writing great books upon it, against one another: but for all this they were admirably agreed, because they agreed in submission to the council! I proceed to show,

III. "That that unity which is indeed a note of the church, we have, and that in a much greater degree than they."

Which point will, I hope, yield some discourse, that will be more useful than barely to discover mistakes, and expose sophistry. For here I shall represent, as well as I can, the true grounds and notions of church-unity, and then see who has most reason to pretend to it, they or we.

1. There is the unity of submitting to "one head, our Lord Jesus Christ;" which is the foundation of all other christian unity, and therefore mentioned by St. Paul, amongst the principal reasons why the church is "one body, one Lord."*

2. There is the unity of professing the common faith, that was "once delivered to the saints," which is grounded upon the authority of the Scriptures, and summarily expounded in the ancient creeds. And therefore to "one Lord," the apostle, in the forementioned place, adds, "one faith."

3. There is an unity of sacraments in the church—"one baptism;" by which we are all admitted into the same state of duties

* Eph. iv. 5.

and of privileges, undertaking the conditions of the new covenant, and gaining a right to the promises thereof. Thus saith St. Paul, "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."* And the like unity is inferred from the other sacraments. "We being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."† And again, "We are all made to drink into one Spirit."

4. There is also an unity of obedience to all the institutions and laws of Christ, which is an instance of unity that ought by no means to be forgotten; this being no less a common duty than the profession of the faith, the performance whereof uniteth us effectually to him, as to our head, and maketh us living members of his body.

5. There is the unity of christian affection and brotherly kindness, of which our Lord spake when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." Thus St. Paul, "The members should have the same care one of another," &c.‡

6. There is an unity of discipline and government, which is maintained chiefly by retaining in substance the same form that was left in the church by the apostles, by the bishops and pastors confederating together, as much as may be, for the edification of their flocks; by regarding every regular act of authority in one church, as the act of the whole, and giving no occasion to breach of christian communion, by abusing a lawful, or by claiming an undue authority, &c.

7. There is likewise an unity of communion in the service and worship of God, in "glorifying God with one mouth," in joining in the same religious assemblies, for prayer and sacraments, for acts of common piety and devotion, according to the rules of the gospel. I need not mention any more instances of christian unity, since those that are more particular may be easily deduced from these.

Now to speak clearly, there ought to be all these kinds and instances of unity in the church; but we see evidently that they are not all there, I mean in every part and member of the church. And therefore they are not all necessary to the being of a church,

* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

† 1 Cor. x. 17

‡ 1 Cor. xii.

how necessary soever they may be whether to the well-being of it, or to the salvation of those persons whereof the church consists. But some of them are necessary to the being of the church ; and they are the acknowledgment of the *one Lord*, the profession of *one faith*, and admission into the state of christian duties and privileges by *one baptism*. And this is all that I can find absolutely necessary to the being of a church, inasmuch as the apostle says, “that we are all baptized into one body.” And therefore so far as unity in these things spreads and prevails in the world, so far and no farther is the body of the church propagated, because it is one by this unity. But then indeed there ought to be a farther unity, an unity of observing all the institutions of our Lord Jesus, an unity of christian charity and good-will, an unity of government and discipline, an unity of communion in religious assemblies ; to which I will add also, that there ought to be an unity of care, to keep out of the communion of Christians all dangerous errors and unlawful practices ; and when such begin to appear, much more if they have taken root and are grown to a scandal, to root them out again. But unity in these things does not run through the whole church, or through that body which is one in the three former respects ; and therefore it must necessarily be granted, that the church is not one body in these latter respects, though it ought to be so.

But because these are proper instances of church-unity, though not absolutely necessary to the being of the church, therefore it cannot be denied that those particular churches which keep unity in these respects better than others do, have the mark of ecclesiastical unity in a higher degree than those others, inasmuch as they have not only that unity which is a mark of a true church, but that also which is the mark of a pure church ; and are not only one body in those things without which they could not be parts of the catholic church, but one also in those things wherein all other parts of the church ought to be one with them.

We therefore, according to truth, allow the church of Rome to be a part of the catholic church, because she holds that one Lord, that one faith, that one baptism, which we hold, and without which there could be no church at all. And thus far she maintains catholic unity.

But inasmuch as she hath violated the institution of our Lord Jesus, concerning the other sacrament, as in other respects, so by withholding the cup from the people, notwithstanding he said, "Drink ye all of this," and that the apostle said, "We are all made to drink into one Spirit," even all that belong to the body of Christ; she has departed from catholic unity—the unity of obedience.

Because she will not be content to be a sister, but claims to be the mother and mistress of all other christian churches, and has advanced her bishop to be head and monarch of the whole church, and will have communion with no other christian society but such as will be content to become her subjects, and will allow no act of ecclesiastical authority to be valid, but in a state of dependence upon her, she has therefore departed from the catholic unity of government and discipline.

Because she has brought the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of saints, &c. into her creed, and practices suitable to such false doctrines into her worship, she has departed from that purity of professing the faith, &c. in which all churches should be one.

And because she will have no communion with us but upon these terms, which are impossible, she has departed from the unity of catholic communion.

Finally, because she has pursued all Christians that dare to open their mouths against these innovations, with anathemas, &c. and sacrificed the lives of innumerable Christians to her resentments, she has departed from the unity of catholic charity.

With these things the church of England cannot be charged, nor with any such things as these, not truly and justly, I am sure. In her worship and administration of the sacraments, she transgresseth not the institutions of the Lord; in her government she encroacheth not upon the liberty of other churches; to her creed she hath added no novelties; to her communion she hath annexed no unlawful conditions; she doth not unchurch those parts of Christendom that hold the unity of the faith, no, not that church itself, the church of Rome, which has added thereunto so many enormous innovations: she hath not embroiled the world, nor wasted countries with violence. Upon such accounts as these, she hath the mark of christian unity incomparably more than the other church.

From such distinct notions of unity as I have laid down, it is evident, that nothing can be more idle than to seek for a church by that mark of unity which the Cardinal lays down, which comes to no more than this, that men are to be all of a mind, that there are to be no divisions among them, &c. since it is not merely unity that is a mark of the true church, but unity in the true faith; nor is unity the mark of a pure church, unless it be upon terms of obedience to God, of charity to one another, of keeping the faith unmixed with errors and innovations, and the worship of God free from material defects and forbidden practices.

From hence also the folly of that conceit may be easily discerned, that in this divided state of Christendom, there must be *one* church which is the *only* church of Christ, exclusively to all the rest, that are not in communion with her: which is as much as to say, “that because there is not that unity amongst Christians which there ought to be, therefore there is none at all; and because they are not united in one communion, therefore they are not united in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” That absurd principle now mentioned, is advanced by the Romanist, for the sake of this inference—that because we grant the church to be but one, and withal acknowledge them to be a true church, therefore we being divided from them, can be no true church ourselves: that is to say, because we acknowledge that they have that one faith, in which all that are united belong to the church, therefore we are out of the church ourselves who have the unity of that faith too, and moreover the unity of observing all the institutions of Christ, and the unity of catholic terms of communion, &c. which they have not.

If some part of the church give just cause of offence, or if another takes offence where none is given, this is indeed contrary to the duty of the members of the church, but not utterly inconsistent with their being members of it. And if St. Paul was in the right when he said, “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the head, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?” it will be also true, that, though the foot should say to the hand, “Thou art not of the body, because thou art not the foot,” the hand would be of the body for all that.

As for the unity of communion which they boast so much of

in the church of Rome, I say, it is an unity of communion *among themselves*, but it is not the *catholic* unity of communion, because the terms of it are, many of them, unjust and unlawful ; whereas we of the church of England, having as much unity of communion among ourselves as they, have this also to say, as we have abundantly shown, that the terms of our communion are, every one of them, just and lawful, and therefore ours is a catholic unity. If there are some protestants that will not communicate with us, it is no more our fault, than that the papists refuse to do so. And though in point of *interest* this tends to weaken, yet in *controversy* it cannot prejudice the common cause of reformation. That part of the West that has left the church of Rome may labour under discords that affect their very communion, while she herself does not so labour, and yet in the cause against her they may be all in the right. Where truth is maintained against a corrupt church, there may yet be disobedience to authority, the over-valuing of questions of no great moment, and a greater stress laid upon opinions and practices than the cause will bear ; and shall this be sufficient to break christian communion ? And at the same time gross errors may be maintained, and with one consent imposed upon the world by the other church ! and all the while the differences, how weighty soever, that happen by the bye may be so over-ruled by force and power, and by the sensible interests of this world, that they shall not affect their communion with one another ! But for the reasons already laid down, it were an absurd thing to choose a church by the mark of such unity.

In short, if we would in all respects keep within the unity of the church, this must be done by professing true doctrine,—by leading good lives,—by a charitable spirit and behaviour towards all Christians,—by frequenting prayers and sacraments,—and by submitting to the authority of our lawful guides in all things of indifference and expedience : and then we may be sure, that whatever others do, “ *we* keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ;” and, though the church after all is not that *one* body in all respects which it ought to be, and which it would be if all men did their duty, yet that we ourselves are such members of that one body as we ought to be, and as all others ought to be likewise. Now all this unity we may keep in the communion of

the church of England, but we cannot keep it all in the communion of the Roman church, as the terms thereof now stand. But if this unity be not enough, when once the Romanists can prove that union to the pope as head of the church, and union to the Roman church in all that she believes and teaches, is also necessary to *our* being of the church, or even to our maintaining that unity which ought to be amongst Christians, *we* will also acknowledge the pope's supremacy, and believe as the Roman church believes; but not till then.

THE
EIGHTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
SANCTITY OF DOCTRINE.*

BY DR. SCOTT.

As the New Covenant is the charter upon which the church of Christ is founded, and as all the blessings which this covenant promises are appropriated to that sacred society, to be in communion with it is doubtless a matter of vast importance to the souls of men, and (it being so) it is not to be imagined but that the blessed Jesus (the most concerned and careful friend of souls) hath been sufficiently mindful to leave such plain and easy directions behind him, how we may find his church, and satisfy ourselves whether we are in fellowship with it or not, as that neither the learned nor unlearned may be left in the dark for solution in such a momentous inquiry. But how much the church of Rome hath made it her business to snarl at and perplex several points of religion, which our Saviour left plain and obvious enough to all capacities, is too notorious; and in nothing more than in this, how to discover and find out the true church: in order to which, her most learned doctors (and particularly Cardinal Bellarmine) have given us certain notes; by which, as they pretend, the true church may be distinguished by honest and diligent inquiries from all false

* "Octava Nota est Sanctitas Doctrinæ."—BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*. lib. iv. cap. 11.

churches whatsoever. But how far these notes or signs are from performing what is promised for them, hath been sufficiently proved upon a very fair examination of the seven first of them.

I proceed therefore to the eighth, viz. "Sanctity of Doctrine:" which I doubt not to make appear, performs as little as either of the former. In order to which, I shall endeavour to show,

I. What the Cardinal means by "sanctity of doctrine."

II. That according to his notion of it, "sanctity of doctrine" is no certain note of the true church.

III. In what sense it is a certain note, by which any honest inquirer may distinguish a true church from a false one.

IV. That neither in this, nor in the Cardinal's notion of it, can the true church be found by any honest inquirer, according to the principles of the church of Rome.

I. What is it that the Cardinal here means by "sanctity of doctrine?" To which, in short, I answer, it is the profession of the true religion, both as to doctrine of faith, and doctrine of morals, without any mixture of error. For so he explains it himself: "The true church is not only catholic, and apostolic, and one, but also holy, according to the Constantinopolitan Creed; but it is evident the church is said to be holy, because its profession is holy, containing nothing false as to doctrine of faith, nothing unjust as to doctrine of morals." And a little after, "By this note it is evident that no church but ours is a true church; because there is no sect, either of pagans or philosophers, or Jews, or Turks, or heretics, which doth not contain some errors that have been exploded, and are manifestly contrary to right reason." By which it is evident that he excludes all sorts of errors from that profession of religion, which he here sets up as a mark of the true church. And therefore, after he had given a brief enumeration of the errors of all other sects, as well of pagans, and Jews, and Mahometans, as of Christians, he thus concludes: "But as for our catholic church, it teaches no error, no turpitude, nothing against reason" (no, not excepting transubstantiation), "though many things above reason; therefore she alone is absolutely holy, and to her alone appertains what we say in our Creed, I believe the holy church." In which words he expressly points and directs

us to *his* catholic church, by this mark or note, that it “teaches no error,” &c. By this it is evident that sanctity of doctrine, in the Cardinal’s sense, consists in an unerring profession of the true religion, without the least intermixture of error. Now though it is certain that that is the best and purest church which hath the least of error and corruption in its doctrine and discipline, yet it is as certain that that which is the best church is not the only true church; for the only true church is the catholic church, which consists of a great many particular churches, whereof some are more and some less pure from error and corruption, and yet all of them are true churches: for all particular bodies and societies of Christians that are true parts of the catholic church are true churches, as being homogeneous parts of the catholic church, and consequently partaking of the same common nature with it. But when we are discoursing of the notes of the true church, that which we mean by them is such certain marks and characters, by which an honest inquirer may distinguish such societies of Christians as are the true churches of which the true catholic church consists, from such as are not; and therefore that can be no true note of the true church, which doth not distinguish it from all false churches, and whose contrary note is consistent with the being of a true church. I proceed therefore,

II. To show, “That sanctity of doctrine, according to Bellarmine’s sense of it,—that is, a pure profession of true religion, without any intermixture of error,—is no true note, or mark, or character, by which any honest inquirer can certainly distinguish the true church from all false churches.” And this, I doubt not, will evidently appear, if we consider what are the necessary properties of all true notes, by which things are to be known and distinguished; and they are these four:—

1. Every true note ought to be common to all of the same kind with the thing which it notifies.
2. It ought to be proper and peculiar to *that* kind of things of which it is a note, and not common to things of another kind.
3. It ought to be more known than the thing which it notifies.
4. It ought to be inseparable from it.

The three last of which, Bellarmine himself owns to be necessary properties of every true note (cap. 2), though the first he

did not think meet to take notice of, for a reason best known to himself ; if therefore this note, according to Bellarmine's sense of it, hath neither of these properties belonging to it, it can be no true note of the true church ; and that none of them do belong to it, I doubt not but I shall make evidently appear.

1. First, " Every true note ought to be common to all of the same kind with the thing which it notifies." Thus every true note of a true man, for instance, ought to be common to all human kind ; and so every true note of every wise man, ought to be common to all wise men ; and by the same rule, every true note of the true church ought to be common to all true churches : for as the true church is nothing else but only a collection of all true churches, whatever is a certain note of *the* true church must necessarily belong to *all* true churches in the world. And, indeed, since the end of our inquiry after the true church is, that we may communicate with it ; and since we can no otherwise communicate with the true church, but by communicating with some particular church that is a true part of it ; the proper use of the notes of the true church is, to direct our inquiries, whether this or that church be a true part of it ? or, which is the same thing, whether by communicating with this or that particular church, we do communicate with the true catholic church ? And therefore, unless the notes of the true catholic church are such as do appertain to all true churches, they can never give us any certain direction, in what church we may communicate with the true catholic church ; for since we can communicate with the true catholic church in none but a true church, no note can give us any certain direction where to communicate with the catholic church, but what directs us to a true church ; and no note can certainly direct us to a true church, but what belongs to all true churches. If, therefore, not to err in its profession be a certain note whereby to find the true catholic church, it must necessarily belong to all true churches, and consequently that can be no true church, which in any instance whatsoever errs in its profession. And indeed, since all the true churches in the world are only so many similar parts of the true catholic church, and the true catholic church is only the *whole* of all those similar parts, or all true churches together ; whatever the catholic church is, besides its being the whole, *all* the true

churches must be of which it doth consist ; and consequently, if that church be unerring, these must be so also : for how is it possible that the whole, which consists of all the parts, should be unerring, unless all the parts are unerring ? If, therefore, not to err in its profession be a true note of the true church, all true churches must necessarily partake of it ; and consequently all those must be false churches which profess any error ; than which there is scarce any proposition in religion more notoriously false. It is true, whatever church errs in any fundamental article of religion, doth thereby cease from being a true church, because those articles are the very foundations upon which every true church stands ; and therefore when any church removes them, or any of them, it must necessarily sink from the very being of a true church into a false and heretical communion : but there are many errors which do not at all touch, or in the least affect the fundamentals of religion, and these a true church may possibly profess, and yet maintain her foundations firm and unshaken ; and so long as a church professes all those truths which are necessary to the being of a true church, it is so far a true church, though while possessing such fundamentals it should profess opinions contrary to some other truths, which are not necessary to the being of a true church : for how can its professing any error, which doth not contradict any truth which is necessary to the being of a true church, make it cease to be a true church ? or how can that be a false church upon the account of its profession, which professes all those truths which are necessary to the founding and constituting of a true church ? If the profession of every error in religion be sufficient to destroy the verity of a church, then the profession of every truth must be necessary to found it ; because every true church being founded upon truth, there is no error can destroy it, but what takes away the truth which founds it : and, therefore, unless it be founded upon the profession of every truth, it cannot be destroyed by the profession of every error ; and consequently none can be true churches, but such as profess every true proposition in religion ; which being admitted, the profession of every true church must contain almost as many articles, as itself doth contain communicants. And indeed, if none can be true churches but such as profess no errors, no two

churches whatsoever can differ in any opinion, though ever so inconsiderable, but that one of the two must be a false church ; because wherever there is a difference in opinion, there must be an error on one side or other. As for instance, there was a very early difference in opinion between the eastern and western churches about the time of the *celebration of Easter* ; in which, if either of them were in the right, to be sure the other must be erroneous ; and if neither, both. Did then the erring church continue a true church or not, notwithstanding its error ? If it did, then a true church may err in its profession, and yet be a true church still ; if it did not, then both were false churches ; because though each believed that the other erred, yet for a great while they mutually owned each other for true churches ; in which (if every error destroys the verity of a church) they both of them erred, and thereupon both ceased to be true churches. And if we inquire into the church of Rome, which now pretends to be the only true church in the world, we shall find that in several instances, it professes doctrines now quite the contrary to what it professed heretofore. Either, therefore, the profession of some errors is consistent with the being of a true church, or the Roman church must either have been a false church heretofore, or be a false church now ; and seeing the Roman church now consists of several churches, some of which profess contrary to one another (as particularly in that celebrated question, “ Whether the pope be superior to a general council, or a general council to the pope ”), it is certain, that if either of them are in the right, there must be an erroneous profession on the one side or other. And if the Roman church err in any of its parts, how can it be unerring in the whole, which is nothing but all the parts together ? For if she allow any church to be a true church, or part of the true church, which professes any error, she errs herself (supposing an unerring profession to be a true note of the true church), and consequently is herself a false church ; if she doth not, then in receiving churches which differ in their profession, she receives into her communion some that are no true churches ; which I doubt not will go as far towards unchurching her, as the profession of most errors whatever can. In short, therefore, if *not to err* in its profession in any matter be a note of the true church,

all true churches must necessarily partake of it, and consequently none can be true churches, which in any point whatever profess erroneously : which, as I have proved, is utterly false ; and which, if it were true, would perhaps as much damnify the church of Rome in the opinion of any sober and honest inquirer, as any one church now extant in the world.

2. Secondly, “ Every true note ought to be proper and peculiar to that kind of things of which it is a note, and not common to things of another kind :” otherwise it is impossible that it should truly distinguish the one from the other. But this note of not erring in its profession, is not peculiar to true churches ; for since there may be a schism without any error in faith, or heresy, we must either allow schismatical societies of Christians to be true Christians (which the church of Rome to be sure will never admit), or that it is by no means peculiar to true churches not to err in their faith. That which may be common to schismatical communions with the true church, cannot be peculiar to the true church (supposing schismatical communions not to be the true church, or the true parts of the true church). But the Cardinal himself owns that there have been schisms which did not err in their faith, and yet were without the true church ; for so in his forecited chap. 2, “ There may be doctrine pure from all error in a false church ; for so pure schismatics, as heretofore the Luciferians and Donatists, had in the beginning very sound doctrine among them, and yet were without the true church.” Where, by the way, it is evident the good man had quite forgot that sanctity of doctrine was hereafter to be one of his own notes of the true church ; for if (as he tells us in this very chapter), the notes of the true church are such as are proper and peculiar to it, it is plain that his memory failed him either when he made sanctity of doctrine to be one of these notes, or when he allowed this note to be common to false churches with the true. Since, therefore, according to him, there have been communities of Christians in the world, which have not erred in their faith, and yet were neither the true church, nor any true parts of it ; and since what *hath* been, may be again ; how is it possible for any honest inquirer after the true church to find any one church in the world, to which this note of *not erring* is proper and peculiar ? The

catholics did not err in their faith, the Donatists and Luciferians did not err in theirs ; how then is it possible to discover by this note of *not erring* in faith, which of the three were the true church, since that can be no true note of the true church, which is not peculiar to it, and *not erring in faith* was common to them both ?

3. Thirdly, “ Every true note ought to be more known than the thing which it notifies :” for how can we know a thing by that which is as unknown to us as the thing itself ? If, therefore, not to err in any point whatsoever be a true note of the true church, the truth of every article comprised in the profession of that which is the true church must be more known than that *it is* the true church ; which, considering how very large and extensive the public professions of churches now are, cannot be supposed without making the true church to be one of the darkest and obscurest things in the world. Besides, according to the principle of the Cardinal and his church, it is the true church only that can fully instruct a man in the truth of all those points, of which the unerring profession of the true church consists ; and therefore a man must have found the true church, and been instructed by it, before he can be certain that those points are all true ; of which more hereafter. Besides which, I say, it is to be considered, that there are sundry doctrines now professed by most churches, of which ordinary capacities can form no certain judgment. I confess, if the public professions of the churches now in being were confined to the fundamental articles of religion, it were an easy matter for an *ordinary* inquirer to satisfy himself concerning the truth of them ; because whatever is fundamental, is so plainly revealed, that probity of mind, together with sound intellect, are the only accomplishments that are requisite to men’s attainment of the knowledge of it : but since the generality of the public professions of churches do, together with such doctrines as are fundamental, comprehend such as are not, and sometimes such as are very remote from fundamentals ; and since many of these are not so plainly revealed, but that *pro* and *con* they are involved with such difficulties as have perplexed even the most learned and judicious inquirers ; therefore to satisfy one’s self fully that such professions as these are in all points true, without the least inter-

mixture of error, requires great *sagacity* as well as probity of mind : for there is scarce any one church now extant in the world but what professes some doctrines which in some other churches are hotly controverted and opposed ; and since there are sundry churches in the world, which in sundry points profess doctrines contrary to one another, and there are scarce any two churches which in all points are agreed, it is certain that a great part of them must in one point or other be erroneous ; and since the church of Rome doth in several articles differ from all other churches in the world, either she by this note must be a false church, or there is no true church in the world but herself. Now in the midst of such a vast multiplicity of professions, how is it possible for an *ordinary* inquirer to conclude with any certainty, which of them is true, and which false ? Especially considering that as to some of the points in which they differ there are such fair probabilities *pro* and *con*, as are sufficient to suspend any modest judgment from determining it one way or other ; and that others of them depend upon such scholastical niceties, and are defended and opposed by such subtile and metaphysical reasonings, such critical senses of texts and ambiguous accounts of ecclesiastical antiquity, as that scarce one man in a thousand is capable of forming any certain judgment concerning them. If therefore, before I can conclude that this or that is a true church, it must be *more known* and evident to me that it doth *not err* in any point whatever, *than that it is* a true church ; then to determine which is the true church, is doubtless one of the most obscure and difficult points in the world, and I must be a very learned and judicious divine, before I can modestly pretend to have found it. To what a miserable uncertainty then are mankind abandoned, when it is as much as their souls are worth to be in the true church, and yet are left to seek it by such an intricate note as this, whereby scarce one man in a thousand is capable of finding it !

4. And lastly, Every true note ought to be inseparable from the thing which it notifies ; for there is no note that can notify or make known a thing, if, without it, the thing may be what it is ; and if that which is the note of it may be separated from it, it may be the very same thing which it is, though it hath not that note. If therefore this note of an unerring profession be not

inseparable from the true church, it may be the true church though not unerring in its profession. Wherefore, before I can be certain that any church which pretends to be the true church, is the true church, I must be certain that this note of *not erring* is inseparable to it. But before I can be certain that this note is inseparable from any one church now extant, I must be certain not only that it doth not err now (which, as I have showed above, the generality of men can never be), but also that it never hath erred, nor ever will: for, as the Cardinal hath stated the matter, the thing of which we are to inquire, is not, "Which of the churches now extant are true churches, or parts of the catholic church?" but, "Which of them are the true catholic church?" If we were only to inquire which of them are the true parts of the catholic church, all that we had to do was to satisfy ourselves which of them at present have the true notes of a true part of the catholic church; but as for particular churches, it is agreed on all hands, that they may be true parts of the catholic church at one time, and yet not be so at another; so that as to the particular churches, all that I need inquire is only this, "Whether at present they are true churches?" or, which is the same thing, "Whether they have at present the true notes of the true churches?" But if I inquire, as the Cardinal doth, "Which of all the churches now extant is the true catholic church," before I can be fully answered, I must not only be satisfied which of them is a true church at present, but also which of them shall always continue so: because though particular churches may cease to be true churches, yet the catholic church cannot, it being founded on that promise of our Saviour, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And therefore, before I can be secure of any present church, that it is the true catholic, I must have some certainty not only that it hath not erred for the time past, and that it doth not err at present, but also that it will not err for the time to come; for since that the true catholic church is always to continue, if *not to err* in its profession be a true note of it, it must always be inseparable from it, as well for the time to come, as for the time past and present. But that it is possible for a church which doth not err now, and did not err heretofore, to err hereafter, the church of Rome

cannot deny ; because she allows no church now extant, not to err, but herself, and yet owns that there are many churches now in being, which once did not err, and for several ages continued untainted with error, which yet have erred since, and therefore are now no true churches ; and therefore seeing that in the nature of the thing, it is no more impossible that a church which doth not err now may have erred heretofore, and may err again hereafter, than that a church which errs now may not have erred heretofore, and may not err again hereafter ; I cannot conclude of any church, that because it doth not err at present, therefore it never hath erred, nor ever will. Suppose then that there were only two churches in the world, viz. the Roman and Greek, and that the Roman church at present doth not err, and the Greek doth ; I can from hence no more conclude, that *not erring* is inseparable from the Roman church, than that *erring* is inseparable from the Greek. The Roman church doth not err now ; what then ? Neither did the Greek church err once : why then may not the Greek as well be the true church, because once it did not err, as the Roman, because now it doth not ? Since not to have erred heretofore, and not to err now, are only different respects of the same thing to different times ; and since the not erring at one time, doth no more notify the true church, than the not erring at another ; it is not therefore sufficient to notify either to be the true church, that this note belonged to it at such or such a time, whether it be the time past or the time present, since one time or other it hath belonged to them both ; but *that* of the two must be the true church, to which it always belonged, and from which it was never separated. But before I can pretend to be certain that it always belonged to the church of Rome, I must have perused the histories of the church, through all times past to the present moment : but alas ! those histories, as the learned of all sides confess, are some of them so short and imperfect, others so partial and insincere, and others so repugnant and contradictory to one another, that supposing there were some church now in being that never erred, and that church were the Roman, it is next to impossible for me to be certain of it ; for even in the histories of the church of Rome, which pretends to be the only unerring church, there are so many (at least seeming) contradictions of one pope

and general council to another, that it is impossible for any man, who is not prepossessed with a strong opinion of her infallibility, to pronounce, with any degree of certainty, that she never erred. And methinks it is something hard, that I must seek the true church by such a note, whereby it will be impossible for me to find it, without spending a great part of my life in laborious researches of ecclesiastical history; wherein, after all, in seeking after a church that never erred, I doubt not I shall but seek for a needle in a bundle of hay.

But suppose I were so far satisfied of the Roman church as to believe that it neither hath erred for the time past, nor doth err at the present; before I can be certain that this note is inseparable from her, I must have very good assurance that she will not err for the time to come; and by what argument can you assure me of that? Why, hath not our Saviour promised that “the gates of hell shall never prevail against his true church?” And doth not this necessarily imply that his true church shall never err? Suppose it doth, you ought to consider that I am now inquiring, whether the Roman church be the true church or not? and consequently, whether this promise belongs to her or not? and therefore as yet neither this, nor any other promise, can be a sufficient evidence to me, that this note of *not erring* is inseparable from her for the future. The church of Rome cannot deny but that there are several churches now extant in the world, which for several ages did not err, and yet now are erroneous; and therefore supposing that she hath not erred for these sixteen hundred years past, how can I thence conclude that she will not err hereafter, when she herself owns that there are churches now in being, which for eight or nine hundred years did not err, and yet have erred ever since? And what reason can you give, why it should be more impossible for a church to err after sixteen hundred years’ profession of the truth, than after nine hundred? But before I can be certain that she neither doth err, nor ever did, I must be next to infallible myself; and before I can be certain that she never will, I must be certain that *she* is infallible, because if her not erring for the future be a contingency that may or may not be, I can never be certain whether it will be or not. But it is impossible I should be sure that she is an infallible church, before I am sure

that she is the true church; because if infallibility be granted to any church, it is agreed on all sides, that it is only to the true church; and therefore I must be certain which is the true church, before it can be ascertained which church is infallible. Seeing, therefore, that every true note is inseparable from the thing which it notifies, before I can be certain that I have found the true church, which Christ hath promised to continue to the end of the world, by this note of not erring, I must have very good assurance, not only that this church doth not err at present, but also that not to err is always inseparable from it, both for the time past and the time to come: since, therefore, there is no one church now in being, of which we can be rationally assured as to this matter, the necessary consequence is, that by this note no man can certainly discover which is the true church. And now having proved, that according to the true properties of the notes of the true church, this of *sanctity of doctrine*, as Bellarmine explains it, is no true note for an honest inquirer to seek the true church by, I proceed,

III. To inquire, "In what sense this is a true note of the true church." In short, if by sanctity of doctrine, we understand a professing of all the necessary and essential articles of christian faith, and an admitting of all the essential parts of christian worship and discipline, this, wherever it is, is a certain note of a true church; for nothing can be a certain note of a true church, but what is essential to it as a true church: for whatsoever is *accidental* to it is separable from it, and whatsoever is separable from it, it may have, or not have, and yet be a true church; notwithstanding, therefore, that which doth not appertain to it, as it is a true church, may appertain to a false church as well as a true; but to say that that is not a true church, which hath all the essentials of a true church, is a downright contradiction. If, therefore, we would have such notes of a true church as we may certainly depend upon, we must fetch them from the essence of a true church; and, consequently, we must first state what a true church is, before we can be certain what are the true notes of it. Now, what it is that is necessary to constitute a true christian church may be easily collected, by considering what is necessary to make a true Christian; for a true christian church is nothing

but a society of true Christians. And seeing that Christianity consists of doctrines of faith, and laws of worship and discipline, he only is a true Christian, that owns and receives Christianity in all these parts of it; that is, who acknowledges all the essentials of true christian faith, worship, and discipline. And consequently that must be a true christian church, or society of true Christians, which professes all the essential articles of christian faith, and receives all the essential parts of christian worship and discipline. Wherever, therefore, I find a religious society of men professing all the necessary doctrines of true christian faith, worshipping the one God through the one Mediator, communicating in the true christian sacraments, and submitting to the true christian discipline, duly administered by true christian pastors and governors; there I am certain I have found a true church, if that be a true church which hath all the essentials that constitute a true church. Wherefore before we can know whether this or that be a true church, we must be rightly informed what a true church is; and before we can state what a true church is, we must learn what the true faith and worship and discipline is, because these are the essential ingredients of which a true church is composed. And when we have learned what these are, by them we may certainly discover whether this or that be a true church or not. If, therefore, by *sanctity of doctrine*, we understand the public profession and admission of all the essentials of christian faith, worship, and discipline, it is not only a certain note of a true church, but the *only* certain note of it; because there can be no certain note of a true church, but what is essential to it, and there is nothing essential to it, but what this note comprehends. Wherever this is, there is the entire essence of a true church; and if there were but one church upon earth that had it, that would be the only true church in the world; and if there were ten thousand churches agreeing in it, there would be ten thousand true churches. And now I proceed,

IV. And lastly, to show, that according to the principles of the church of Rome, the true church is not to be found by this note, in which soever of the two senses we understand it: for, if by *sanctity of doctrine*, we mean, with Bellarmine, an unerring

profession of the truth, without any the least intermixture of error, before we can be certain we have found the true church by it, we must be very well assured concerning the profession of that church, which we take to be the true church, that it is in all particulars true, without any the least ingredient of error: or if, by sanctity of doctrine, we only mean the profession of all the essentials of christian faith, worship, and discipline, before we can be certain that we have found the true church by it, we must be very well assured, not only that there are such essential principles, and what they are, but also that they are true; for unless we certainly know that there are such principles, and what they are, we can never be certain whether any one church in the world doth profess them or not. So that before a man can be secure that he hath found the true church by this note, he must be certain either that every thing it professes is true, or at least that the main and fundamental principles of its profession are true: neither of which he can be certain of, according to the principles of the church of Rome. For,

First, She decries men's private judgment of discretion, as utterly insufficient to make any certain distinction of truth from falsehood, in matters of religion.

Secondly, She allows no sufficient rule, beyond the true church, to guide and direct our private judgment of discretion.

Thirdly, She resolves all certainty, as to matters of faith, into the authority of the true church.

Fourthly, She authorizes the true church to impose upon us an absolute necessity of believing such things, as before were not necessary to be believed.

First, The church of Rome decries men's private judgment of discretion, as utterly insufficient to make any certain distinction of truth from falsehood, in matters of religion. Seeing we are to seek the true church by notes, our certainty that we have found it must wholly depend upon our certainty that we have found in it the notes of the true church: but though there is no one thing in the world of which we are more concerned to be certain, than that we have found the true church, and are in communion with it, because no less than our eternal salvation depends upon it; yet it is only our own private judgment of

discretion that, by applying the notes of the true church, can guide us in this point : for while we are in quest of the true church, we have no other way to find it but by carrying the notes of it along with us, and by examining and judging, with our own private discretion, which church these notes belong to. Either our private discretion is sufficient to guide us in this matter, or it is not : if it be not, we can never be certain which is the true church ; if it be, it must be sufficient to guide us in all other necessary points of religion ; because one of the notes by which we are to seek the true church, and that a principal one too, is sanctity of doctrine, or an unerring profession of the true religion, at least in all necessary points. But before we can be certain which church this note belongs to, we must be thoroughly satisfied in our own private discretion, what this unerring profession is, which we can never be till we are certain of the truth of all the particulars of it ; and when we are certain of this, we are certain at least as to all necessary points of true religion, which must all be included in every unerring profession of it. So that before we can be certain that any church is the true church, we must be certain that it doth not err in its profession ; and before we can be certain of this, we must be certain of the truth of all those particular doctrines whereof its profession is composed ; and of this we have as yet no other way to be certain, but only by our own private judgment of discretion, because till we have found the true church, it is impossible we should conduct ourselves by its authority, and in the absence of the true church's authority we have nothing to conduct us but our own private discretion : either therefore the church of Rome must allow, that certainty in *all* (at least in all *necessary*) points of religion, is attainable by the free and honest use of our own private judgment of discretion (which, as I shall show by and by, she can never allow, without undermining her own foundations) ; or she must leave men hovering in eternal uncertainty, as to one of the most necessary points of religion, viz. which is the true church.

Secondly, The church of Rome allows no sufficient rule, beyond the true church, to guide and direct our private judgment of discretion. Since the constitution of the true church is not natural, but entirely founded upon divine institution, this question, "Which

is the true church?" is not to be solved by the principles of nature, but by principles of revelation; and, therefore, without some revealed rule, which is every way sufficient to guide and direct our private discretion, we shall never be able to find out which is the true church; because without such a rule we have nothing but the principles of nature to go by, which in this inquiry are utterly insufficient to direct us. But while we are out of the church, we have no other revealed rule to direct us in our inquiry after it, except that of Scripture; for as for tradition, the church of Rome teaches that the true church is the sole conservator of it, and that though it be a part of divine revelation, yet no man is obliged any further to believe it than the true church hath defined and declared it. And seeing I can have no certainty what is a true tradition till such time as I get into the true church, how can tradition be a rule of faith to me while I am out of it? Or, how can that be a rule of my faith, whilst I am in quest of the true church, which I have no other obligation but the true church's authority to believe? Whilst, therefore, I am out of the true church, the only rule I have to go by in my inquiries after it, is Scripture: and this the church of Rome tells me is insufficient, both because it is not full enough, and because it is not clear enough: which if true, I can never be certain I have found the true church by this note of an unerring profession.

1. She teaches that Scripture is not full enough, as not containing in it all necessary doctrines of faith and morals; but that there are certain unwritten traditions in the church, of equal authority with Scripture, and by which its defects are supplied. And if so, how is it possible I should find the true church by the direction of Scripture? For since, according to this note, that can be no true church, which doth not unerringly profess all necessary doctrines of faith and manners; when I have found a church which professes all such necessary doctrines, as are in Scripture, I cannot be secure that it is a true church, (supposing there are other necessary doctrines out of or beyond Scripture, viz. in the unwritten traditions) because then the profession of these will be altogether as necessary to its being a true church, as the profession of those. All that Scripture can satisfy me in is only this, whether such a church profess all the necessary

doctrines *in* Scripture. But if there are any necessary doctrines *out* of Scripture, it is certain that the profession of them is as necessary to the being of the true church, as the profession of those that are *in* it; and therefore, before I can be certain that it is the true church, I must be fully satisfied that it professeth both doctrines, which I can never be, unless I have some other rule to go by besides this of Scripture.

Secondly, The church of Rome teaches that the Scripture is no sufficient rule in respect of clearness, the sense of it being so obscurely expressed, that we can never be certain what it is without the interpretation of the true church: which if true, it is utterly impossible for one who is out of the true church ever to find it by the direction of Scripture. For according to this note, that only is the true church which doth not err in its profession, at least in any necessary point either as to doctrines of faith or doctrines of morals. But before I can know whether any church doth not err in its profession, I must be certainly informed what the true profession is, or what are those doctrines of faith and manners of which this true profession consists; as to which the Scripture, if not sufficiently clear, can never certainly inform me. For if I can never be certain what the true sense of Scripture is, without the interpretation of the true church, how is it possible that while I am out of the true church, I should ever be certain of its sense as to all the particular doctrines which the true profession of religion contains? So that according to this principle, the Scripture is so far from being a sufficient rule to one that is out of the true church, that it is perfectly useless to him in his inquiry after it. For either it can certainly direct him to the true church, or it cannot; if it can, it must be sufficiently clear to inform him of its own sense (without the interpretation of the true church) concerning all those doctrines of faith and manners whereof the unerring profession of the true church is composed; and if so, this principle of the Roman church is erroneous; if it be not, to what purpose doth it serve, unless it be to lead him into an endless maze of uncertainties, wherein the further he wanders, the more he will lose himself? so that if a man hath had the misfortune to be born and bred out of the true church, in an heretical or schismatical communion, and is inquiring his way in by this

note of an unerring profession, he hath no other rule to instruct and inform him what this unerring profession is, but only that of Scripture, which, according to the principles of the church of Rome, is insufficient for his purpose. How then is it possible he should ever be certain that he hath found the true church, when the only rule he hath whereby to inquire what that unerring profession is, and whereby he is to seek it, is utterly insufficient to direct him?

Thirdly, The church of Rome resolves all certainty, as to matters of faith, into the authority of the true church; and, indeed, this is the fundamental principle of popery, viz. "That the only ground of certainty, as to matters of faith, is the authority of the present true church, teaching and proposing them." Till such time therefore as we have found the true church, and do believe upon the authority of its teaching, we can never have any true certainty of the matters which we are to believe. And yet before we can be certain that we have found the true church by this note of an unerring profession, we must have very good certainty as to all matters of faith; for we can never be certain upon the authority of any church that what we believe is true, till such time as we are certain that it is the true church; nor can we ever be certain that it is the true church, until we are certain that it doth not err in its profession, or (which is the same thing), that all the matters of faith which it teaches and professes are true: so that the certainty of our faith, after we have found the true church, and do believe upon its authority, must depend upon the certainty of our faith while we were seeking it, and did believe without its authority; because before we can believe with any certainty upon the authority of any church, we must be certain that it is the true church, but we can never be certain that it is the true church, till we are first certain that its profession is true as to all the matters of faith contained in it.

To make the matter more plain, I will briefly represent it in a short dialogue between a protestant and a papist.

Protest. You tell me I can never be certain, as to matters of faith, unless I believe upon the authority of the true church.

Pap. I do; and upon the truth of this proposition all my religion is founded.

Protest. But may I be certain as to matters of faith, if I believe upon the authority of *any* church, though I am not certain whether it be the true church or not?

Pap. To what purpose do you ask this question?

Protest. Because, if I may, then in believing upon the authority of the church of England, which you say is a false church, I shall be as certain as to matters of faith, as you who believe on the authority of the church of Rome, which you say is the only true church.

Pap. Why then I tell you, you can never be certain as to matters of faith, in believing upon the authority of any church, unless you are certain it is the true church upon whose authority you believe them.

Protest. Why so?

Pap. Because it is not the authority of *a* church merely, that is the true ground of certainty, but the authority of the *true* church; otherwise the authority of all churches, true or false, would be equally a true ground of certainty: and, therefore, you can never be certain that the authority of that church, upon which you believe, is a true ground of certainty, unless you are first certain that it is the true church.

Protest. I do allow your reason. But then, pray, how shall I be certain that it is the true church?

Pap. Why, this you must examine by certain notes of the true church, whereof one (and that a principal one) is sanctity of doctrine, or an unerring profession of the true religion.

Protest. But, good sir, can I not be certain that it is the true church, till I am first certain that it doth not err in its profession?

Pap. No.

Protest. Why then I must be certain of the truth of all those matters of faith, whereof its profession consists, before I can be certain that it is the true church.

Pap. You must so.

Protest. But, pray, how shall I, if that be true which you told me just now, viz. "That there is no true ground of certainty, but the authority of the true church"? for how is it possible I should ever be truly certain, when as yet I know no true ground of certainty?

Pap. Why, have you not the authority of the true church?

Protest. But as yet I am not certain that the church, upon whose authority you would have me believe, is the true church; and till I am certain of this, with what certainty can I depend upon her authority? Would you have me be certain that whatsoever she professes is true upon her bare word and authority, before I am certain that she is the true church? If so, why may I not as well believe any other church to be the true church, seeing there is no other church but will pass its word for the truth of its own profession, as well as yours? If not, you must allow me to have some other ground of certainty as to matters of faith, besides the authority of the true church. For before I can securely rely upon the authority of any church, as the true ground of certainty, I must be certain that she is the true church, and my certainty that she is the true church must depend upon my certainty of the truth of all those matters of faith comprised in her profession. So that before I am certain of the truth of her profession, it is too soon for me to rely upon her authority, as the only ground of certainty; and when I am certain of it, it is too late, because I am certain already.

Fourthly, and lastly, The church of Rome gives authority to the true church to impose upon men's minds a necessity of believing such things as before they were not obliged to believe: for she makes the church's authority not only a concurrent motive of faith, but the very formal reason of it, so that we are not only obliged to believe what the church declares, but we are therefore obliged to believe it, because she declares it. It is true, some of the Roman doctors tell us, that the church hath no power to make new articles of faith, but only that seeing there are some old truths in Scripture and in the unwritten traditions of the church, which the church hath not yet declared, and which, therefore, men are not yet obliged to believe, the church hath authority, whenever she thinks meet, to declare them, and thereby to oblige men under pain of damnation to believe them; but others of them, (and particularly Bellarmine, *De Potest. Sum. Pontif.*,) tell us, "that the church of later time not only hath power to explain and declare, but also to *constitute* and command those things which belong to faith." And, indeed, the difference between declaring and *consti-*

tuting or making an article of faith is only verbal ; for an article of faith is a truth that is necessary to be believed ; and therefore if the church, by *declaring* a truth which was not necessary to be believed, *makes* it necessary to be believed, it thereby make that truth an article of faith, which before was not an article of faith : and so to declare, and to make, is the very same thing. But in this they are all agreed, that the true church hath power to make those things necessary to be believed, which were not so before. And if this be true, no man can ever be certain, by this note of an unerring profession, that he hath found the true church ; for before I can be certain that any church (as, for instance, the Roman) is the true church, I must be certain that that church's profession is true ; but when I proceed to examine the particular articles of it (as I must do before I can be certain of the truth of the whole) I shall find there are several of them, of the truth of which, in the opinion of several (even of her own doctors) I have no sufficient ground to be certain, either in Scripture or tradition (which, while I am seeking the true church, are the only rule I have whereby to examine them) as particularly transubstantiation, seven sacraments, necessity of auricular confession, Roman purgatory, and indulgences.—*Vide* Note vi. And if these Roman doctors pretend to be certain of them, upon no other reason but because their church (which they are sure is the true church) hath declared them, how shall I be certain of them, who am but an inquirer whether it be the true church or not, and therefore as yet cannot be supposed to be sure that it is ; for without her declaration, they themselves confess I have no sufficient ground to be certain of the truth of them ; and till I am sure she is the true church, her declarations are no ground of certainty to me : and as I cannot be certain that these articles are true, till I am sure that the church which declares them is the true church ; so supposing that the true church hath power to impose upon me a necessity of believing such things, as before I was not obliged to believe, I cannot be certain that they are false, because no authority can be supposed to have a right to impose upon men such a necessity of believing but what is infallible, and cannot impose what is false on them ; unless it be supposed that men may be rightfully obliged to believe what is false. If, there-

fore, the Roman church be the true church, (as for all I yet know it may,) then for all I yet know it hath authority from God to impose upon me a necessity of believing whatever she declares, and consequently for all I yet know she is infallible. But as for myself, I know that I am a fallible creature, and therefore whatever infallibility declares to me, must certainly be true, whatever probabilities, yea, or seeming demonstrations I may have against it; how then can I be certain that any article is false, which is declared to me by a church, that for all I yet know is infallible? If it be infallible, I am sure that whatever it declares is true: and if it be the true church, it must be infallible, supposing that the true church hath authority to impose new necessities of believing; but whether it be the true church or not is the thing I am now inquiring by this note of "an unerring profession;" but till I am certain one way or the other, whether she be the true church or not, I can never be certain whether her profession be true or false, till I am certain that she is the true church. There are some articles in her profession, of which (as her own doctors confess) I cannot be certain that they are true; and till I am certain that she is not the true church, I can never be certain that any one article in her profession is false; and if I cannot be certain whether she errs in her profession or not, till I am certain whether she be the true church or not, to what purpose should I inquire whether or not she be the true church by this note of an unerring profession? If, supposing her to be the true church, she hath authority from God to oblige me, upon pain of damnation, to believe to-day that which I was not obliged to believe yesterday, to what end do I inquire whether those things which she commands me to believe are true or false? If she be the true church, (as for all I yet know she may be,) I am sure whatever she commands me to believe, must be true; and therefore, till I am certain that she is not the true church, I can never be certain that anything she commands me to believe, is false; for how can I be certain that any one thing she imposes is false, when for all I yet know, she is the true church, which the God of truth (who can neither impose himself, nor authorize any other to impose on me that which is false) hath authorized to impose it? And if, till I am certain that she is not the true church, I can never be certain

that anything she imposes is false, how can I ever be certain, by this note of an unerring profession, whether she be the true church or not? For if anything she professes or imposes be false, by this note she cannot be the true church; but whether anything she professes be false or not, I can never be certain, till I am first certain whether she is or is not the true church.

THE
NINTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ. THE
EFFICACY OF THE DOCTRINE.*

BY DR. LINFORD.

By efficacy of doctrine must be meant, either that power which the word of God has in the minds of particular men to dispose them to believe aright, and to live well; or else that success which it has in drawing multitudes outwardly to profess and embrace it. The former of these is too inward a thing to be the note of a true church, no man being able to know what the word of God has done in another's heart, but instead of that, apt rather to be deceived in what it has done in his own.

The second (which must be what the Cardinal means) can as little be a note, by reason of its uncertainty; and if we cannot be sure of the note, we shall be less so of that which we are to find out by it. If, indeed, there were nothing which could or did move men to relinquish heathenism, Judaism, or Turkism, for our religion, but the pure efficacy of the christian doctrine, it would be a very good note of the excellence of the doctrine itself; but according to the Cardinal's own principles, it could be no note that that were the true church which preached it, since he will not allow the *sincere preaching of truth* to signify anything.† And we shall have much less reason to rely on this note, if we consider how many other things there are, besides the efficacy of the

* "Nona Nota est Efficacia Doctrinæ." BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 12.

† Lib. iv. 2.

christian doctrine, which have converted, and may convert, whole nations to it.

Let us, therefore, at present grant in general the matter of fact to be true, that such conversions as the Cardinal speaks of were made by the church of Rome, yet how shall we know that they were made purely by the efficacy of its doctrine, and that no other means, such as force, &c. were used? Is it enough that he tells us so? The Bishop of Meaux tells us, that in the late great conversion in France, not one of the persons converted suffered violence, either in his person or goods; "that they were so far from suffering torments, that they had not so much as heard them mentioned, and that he heard other bishops affirm the same."* Now if those reverend prelates were wrong (as most people think they were) in a matter of fact, of which they might be eye-witnesses, why may not the learned Cardinal be so too in his relation of conversions made so many hundred years since? If he be wrong, his note falls to the ground; and if it cannot be made plainly to appear to us that he was not wrong, his note, as far it is founded upon those histories which he produces, wants that certainty which should give us that satisfaction. Historians who wrote in those obscure times, and were perhaps themselves converts, being most of them monks, might vain-gloriously ascribe much to the efficacy of their own doctrine; and the Centuriators† themselves, whom he so often quotes, might not be very curious to search, or accurate to relate the chief motives of their conversions, because they wrote before the Cardinal had made efficacy of doctrine a note of the true church, and little dreamt what odd use some men would make of their history. But notwithstanding these neglects and disadvantages, I do not doubt but that if we looked back into the writers of those times, nay, even into the Centuriators themselves, we should find some other things besides efficacy of doctrine, concurring to the conversions which were then wrought: an instance whereof (to pass by at present the particular examination of those mentioned by the Cardinal) we have in those conversions wrought by Charles the Great, to whose victorious arms they were more to be ascribed than to anything else besides.

* Pastoral Letter, pp. 3, 4.

† Ecclesiastical historians who distinguish times by centuries.

For (not to mention that the clergy were not then in any great capacity of doing much by the efficacy of their doctrine, the bishops being so ignorant that they were to be commanded to understand the Lord's Prayer, and could hardly be brought to make some few exhortations to the people, but instead of that turned soldiers, to show that they were willing to do somewhat towards the propagating their religion) such was the zeal of that prince "rather to defend and increase the kingdom of Jesus Christ, than to enlarge his own empire ;* that peace could never be obtained of him upon other terms, than that those who were conquered by him, having left their idol-worship, should embrace the true, sincere, and eternal religion of Christ."† And to engage them to continue firm to it, he sometimes took hostages of them ; and finding them begin to apostatize (which they as often did as they thought themselves able to make head against their conquerors) he was forced to set up a kind of inquisition to keep them in awe, which, Mezeray tells us, lasted in Westphalia till the fifteenth century. Now when the swords of victorious princes, as it happened in this case, had made way for the preaching of the gospel, when the receiving of it was often made one of the terms the conquered must necessarily submit to, the monks had very easy work : whatever doctrine they had preached, might have been efficacious under such circumstances ; so that when there is with the christian doctrine a concurrence of many other things which have so strong an influence upon human nature, it is hard, nay, impossible, for us to know which of them does the work. When different medicines, proper for the same distemper, are administered at the same time, it is not easy to say which of them works the cure.

There is indeed a wonderful efficacy in the christian doctrine ; but we can never be sure that the conversion of a nation is effected by that, when hopes, and fears, and outward force, and necessity, are in conjunction with it.

All which is so far from detracting from the honour of our religion, and the conversions it made in the primitive times, that it sets it in a better light, and makes it shine the brighter. Men were converted then, not to a conquering, but persecuted church.

* Mezeray, in the *Life of Charles the Great*.

† Krantzius, *Præf. ad Metrop.*

The secular power was against them that preached this holy doctrine: much might be lost, and nothing in this world got by it. There were no rewards to encourage men to receive it, but a thousand difficulties and dangers to deter them from it. And then, indeed, the efficacy of the christian doctrine was in its greatest lustre; it wrought all alone, and there was nothing to claim a share in the conquests it made: the simplicity of its preachers cleared them from all suspicion of fraud. The little or no interest they had in the government, makes it plain that they could not use force; and everything concurred to demonstrate that it was purely the efficacy of their doctrine by which they prevailed. But to proceed a little more particularly to answer what the Cardinal has discoursed upon this subject,

I. I shall endeavour to show in general, that the prevalence of any doctrine can be no note of a true church.

II. I shall instance in such particulars as do more particularly affect the church of Rome in this matter, and do make it evident, that the prevalence of the doctrine professed in that church is no note of its being a true church.

III. I shall show the insufficiency of those arguments with which the Cardinal endeavours to prove the contrary.

I. That the prevalence of any doctrine can be no note of a true church, will appear, if we consider,

1. What our Saviour hath said in this matter.
2. The nature of mankind.
3. Matter of fact.

1. Although our Saviour sufficiently understood how much his doctrine was likely to prevail in the world, yet he is so far from making this to be a true note of his church, that he gives as plain intimations of the prevalence of error, and does often bid us take care how we are imposed upon thereby. "Take heed," saith he, "that no man deceive you;* for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many: for there shall arise false Christs,† and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect." When he foretels so general a defection, he cannot

* Matt. xxiv. 4, 5.

† Ver. 24.

be supposed to have thought the prevalency of any doctrine to have been the character of his true disciples. He does indeed compare the preaching of his gospel "to a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is greatest among herbs; . . . to leaven, which leaveneth the whole lump; . . . to a net which gathereth of every kind." All which comparisons do intimate, how much his church would spread far and near; but not that such its diffusiveness was to be relied upon as a note whereby to find it; for by that mark it could not then have been found, when it was but a little flock. Besides that, in the same chapter,* he compares likewise the preaching of his gospel "to a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way; but when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." In which case, if we were to judge by the growth and spreading, we might conclude the tares to have been the best seed, and not sown by an enemy. He compares likewise the ministers of his word to the servants of a certain king, sent out by him to call those who were invited to the wedding, but to no purpose, "for they all made light of it;"† intimating hereby, how possible it is for those who are obstinate, not to hearken to the most efficacious doctrine that can be preached, or the most passionate and earnest invitations which can be made to them. And in the parable of the good seed, some of which fell by the way-side, some upon stony places, some among thorns, and other upon good ground,‡ he does plainly set forth, that let any doctrine be ever so good, the reception which it finds in the world will be no other than what is agreeable to those dispositions of mind which it happens to meet with. And here also, if the rule had been that that is the true doctrine which grows fastest and out-tops the other, we must have understood it by the thorns, which grew up and choaked the good seed. Which leads me to show,

2. A consideration of the temper and constitution of mankind will show how weak a proof of a true church is the prevalency of any doctrine which it teacheth. For men's minds are so uncertain, by reason of the inconstancy of the circumstances which

* Matt. xxiv. 24—26.

† Matt. xxii. 2, &c.

‡ Matt. xiii. 3, 4.

chiefly influence them, that often truth is shut out, where error finds an easy admission. Human nature is so weak a thing, so apt to take impressions, first from this thing, then from another, that no great heed is to be given to its changes, and no certain argument can be drawn from them. Such, indeed, is the power of truth, that were mankind freed from their prejudices against it, were their minds no way biassed by interest or passion, and at the same time fully instructed concerning it, there is no doubt but that it would generally obtain. But when men's inclinations and circumstances are so various, nothing is more manifest than that the receiving or rejecting of truth is a thing too uncertain to be made an infallible note of it. When it is argued on behalf of Christianity, that so many thousands were on the sudden converted to the faith; the force of such an argument does not lie in the bare prevalency of the doctrine, but in its prevalency when placed in such circumstances as it was at the first preaching of the gospel; and when men of mean birth and education (as has already been observed) did, without force or fraud, on the sudden make so many proselytes to a religion, which was so directly contrary to those opinions to which the world has been so long accustomed—a religion which was likely to bring such great inconveniences upon those who embraced it; this indeed was very remarkable, and could be ascribed to nothing but the power of truth, which alone was able to bring about so wonderful an effect. In a word, men being oftener guided by fancy, prejudice, and interest, than by reason, thus become more capable of error than of truth; and when they have once received error, are not only unwilling to part with it, but zealous to propagate it as much as they can. The agreeableness of any doctrine to their wicked lusts and affections, is most likely to win upon them. The craft and cunning of those who lie in wait to deceive, may easily mislead unstable minds into gross mistakes before they are aware. Force, the enjoyment of present preferment, or the hopes of it, may make them profess what they do not believe to be true, and then seek for reasons to defend it. Since then there are so many things beside truth, which may induce men to admit any doctrine; the bare admitting of it, though ever so universally, can be no note of the truth of it, or of the church that teaches it. God has endued

us with a capacity of finding out truth, but at the same time he has made us fallible creatures, and liable to be imposed upon ; so that it behoves us to be aware how we are deceived ; and the more care we take in a concern of this nature, the more we discover our own sincerity and zeal for truth. But let there be ever such clear discoveries of it, it is in our power wilfully to shut our eyes against them ; nay, when we have adhered to truth for some time, we may be tempted either wholly to forsake it, or to intermingle gross errors with it. So that it is as improper to conclude the prevalency of any doctrine to be an argument of the truth of it, or of the church that professeth it, as that any cause is just, because successful. Such is God's infinite wisdom and goodness, that as he does often bless with unexpected success an honest and just design (and they who are sagacious in tracing the footsteps of Providence do easily discover it), so does he likewise frequently exert his power after an extraordinary manner for the propagation of truth. But on the other hand, as he often permits an unjust design to prevail and prosper, so likewise does he suffer error to multiply and increase. And when he does at any time exert his power after an extraordinary manner for the propagation of truth, he still deals with men as with rational creatures ; so that such his power may be resisted, nay, may be so far resisted, as may make him punish with infatuation such their resistance ; as he served the Pharisees upon the account of their obstinacy, " whose eyes he blinded, and whose heart he hardened, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted ;" * and as happened to those whom the apostle makes mention of, upon whom, because " they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved, God sent strong delusions, that they might believe a lie." † Since, therefore, the temper and constitution of mankind is such, as to be daily subject to errors, and liable by the just judgment of God to be at last hardened in them, nothing can with any certainty be determined concerning the truth of any church from the prevalency of any doctrine professed in it.

3. Plain matter of fact shows the insufficiency of this note. For the histories of all ages make it evident, what an influence error had upon men's minds ; and that although truth may have

* John xii. 40, 41.

† 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

happened sometimes to have prevailed, yet that it has been as often refused, and gross and most impious opinions preferred before it. How soon were our first parents,* when their minds were in their greatest strength and vigour, and not as yet biassed by any misapprehension of things, by the cunning artifices of Satan tempted to believe a lie ! After which first and grand mistake, how did their whole stock degenerate ! when “every imagination of man’s heart being evil, it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth.”† Afterward God chose to himself out of the rest of the world a peculiar people, and to secure them against the idolatry and superstition of those who dwelt near them, he gave them particular statutes, which, by threats and promises, and mighty wonders which he wrought for them, he obliged them to observe. Yet how soon did they forget God, and turned after idols ! So that in the time of Ahab, according to God’s own account, there were but seven thousand who had not bowed unto Baal. If the efficacy of the doctrine had been a note of the true church, I do not see why the priests of Baal had not as much reason at that time to have insisted upon it, as the Romish priests can have now. At our Saviour’s coming the Pharisees had infected the whole nation with their traditions, and so obstinately did they adhere to them, that notwithstanding the many miracles which our Saviour had wrought, and notwithstanding the holiness of his life and conversation, few believed in him, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, made mention of in John xii. 38, “Lord, who hath believed our report ?” of which our Saviour himself complains, (John v. 43,) “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” And in the eleventh of St. Matthew, ver. 20, &c. he does most severely upbraid the cities “wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not ;” and does openly declare, that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them. If any doctrine was likely to have been efficacious, one would have thought the doctrine of our Saviour, when taught by himself would have been so ; and yet we find that no prophet was ever less respected than he was, even among his own countrymen. The same thing happened

* Gen. iii. 5, 6.

† Gen. vi. 5, 6.

likewise to St. Paul, as we read, Acts xiii. 45, and Acts xxviii. 24, &c. After Christianity had for above three hundred years been struggling to get ground in the world, how strangely did Arianism on a sudden prevail against it! One would have thought, that after people had for some time been confirmed in the truth, they should not have been easily tempted to embrace so gross an error. But yet such was the efficacy of this heresy, that as Theodoret relates, the emperor Constantius, in a discourse with Liberius, bishop of Rome, urgeth it as an argument against his intercession on behalf of Athanasius. "Pray," saith he, "how big a part of the world are you, that you alone stand up for a wicked man (so he called Athanasius), and to disturb the peace of the whole world?"* Which the bishop was so far from thinking a good argument, that he immediately replied, the true faith loseth nothing by my being alone; for there were formerly but three who resisted the king's commandment.† Neither did the same heresy prevail only at home amongst the orthodox Christians, but was likewise victorious abroad amongst the idolatrous nations, of which the same author gives us a notable instance, when he tells us, that one Ulphilas,‡ a bishop of great authority amongst the Goths, being corrupted by Eudoxius, persuaded the whole nation to embrace it. About three hundred years after so general a defection from the true faith by Arianism, the impostor Mahomet arose,§ whose doctrine, in the space of a hundred years, overrun a great part both of the east and south, and did continue so far to prevail, that when Brerewood|| made the computation of such as had received it, he reckons them to be six parts of thirty (into which he supposeth the whole world to be divided) whereas he allots but five parts to the whole number of Christians of what denomination soever. As to this particular, the Cardinal urgeth, that Mahometanism is propagated by force of arms, and not by the efficacy of its doctrine. In answer to which assertion (besides that the world is not ignorant how little reason the Cardinal had to make this objection, and that Mahomet must have first converted those by his doctrine whom he afterwards made use of to

* Theod. lib. ii. Hist. Eccl. c. 16. † Dan. iii. 18.

‡ Theod. lib. iv. c. ult.

§ Paulus Æmyl. lib. ii. de Gest. Franc. Calv. Chron. ab ann. 631 ad ann. 718.

|| Brerewood's Inquiries, c. 14.

convert others by force) I shall set down this remarkable instance, whereby it will manifestly appear how much the Mahometan missionaries, even without the assistance of any outward force, may sometimes prove too hard for the Roman ones. Bati, king of the Tartars, having wasted the christian territories, returns into Scythia, leaving all Europe in great consternation. Pope Innocent IV. in the year 1246, from the council of Lyons, sends a company of religious men a long journey to him, to exhort him to worship the one living and true God, and his only Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and to abstain from shedding christian blood. When the Tartar had heard the pope's request, he promised for five years not to trouble the Christians.* But as soon as the pope's messengers were gone, some Saracens came, exhorting the Tartars to embrace the Mahometan sect rather than Christianity; and what they said had such effect, especially upon the emperor, that they embraced Mahometanism, and keep to it still. In this case the two doctrines had very fair play; for the Tartars were prejudiced on neither side, neither could any force be made use of to compel them to receive one doctrine more than the other. If either had the advantage, it was that of the Romish church; for that had got the start, but was soon wholly rejected; and the other has ever since been embraced.

Were not those instances which I have mentioned sufficient to show what little judgment can be formed of the truth of any church from the reception which its doctrine has met with in the world, I might here add the conversions wrought by those of the Greek church, whom the church of Rome accounts heretics. Frumentius, sent by Athanasius, converted the Indians; Moyses, an Alexandrian monk, the Saracens. And concerning the conversion of the Muscovites, Paulus Jovius thus speaks: "above five hundred years since, (says he,) the Muscovites worshipped the heathen gods, Jupiter, &c. but then were they first initiated in the christian rites, when the Greek bishops, out of an inconstant temper, began to dissent from the Latin church; and it so happened, that the Muscovites, in the same sense, and with a most hearty belief, followed those religious rites which they had received from their Greek teachers."† I might likewise make mention of

* Laur. Surii Comment. p. 25.

† De Legatione Muscov.

the great efficacy of the reformed doctrine, which in the space of fifty years, (when Bishop Jewel set out the Defence of his Apology,)* notwithstanding the great opposition which had been made against it, had overrun whole nations, and mightily prevailed even in those kingdoms where the princes and governors were still popish. The distinction which Bellarmine makes, that “heretics do not convert men to the true faith; and that the Goths were cheated into Arianism; that they pervert catholics;”† is nothing to the purpose: for if by heretics men may be converted or cheated into what is false, if catholics may be so easily perverted, then the effect which any doctrine has upon men’s minds, can be no note of those being members of a true church who profess it. If the doctrine which they who are converted have received, be a true doctrine, this indeed is a good note of a true church, and we are willing to stand or fall by it; but their bare conversion is no note at all, because as to its being received or not received, error has had the same fate in the world as truth itself has had. And of this the Cardinal himself was sensible enough, when, having forgot what he had made to be the ninth note of the church, he repeats, in an oration at the end of his controversies, this objection of the reformists: “How is it possible, (say they,) that the doctrine should not be from God, which in so short time has overrun so many people, provinces, and kingdoms?”‡ And then makes this answer: “If it be lawful to philosophize after this manner, we shall have much more reason to wonder why the Alcoran of Mahomet in so great a part of the world has so easily prevailed.”

II^d Answer. Having thus in general shown, that *efficacy of doctrine* can be no note of a true church, it necessarily follows, that the efficacy of *the doctrine professed in the church of Rome*, can be no note of its being so. But yet, that I may further show what little reason that church, of all others, has to pretend that it is the character of its being a true church, I desire, in the second place, that these following particulars may be considered.

1. That although we charge the church of Rome with many errors and mistakes, yet we allow it to contain in it a mixture of truth. Now this very mixture of truth may perhaps be of suffi-

* Def. of Apology, p. 36.

† BELLAR. de Not. lib. iv. cap. 12.

‡ Orat. in Scholis habita, Edit. in 8vo. Ingolst. 1593.

cient force to make proselytes; but then it does not follow, but that such proselytes may likewise have embraced the errors which are mixed with it, as well as the truth itself. The Indians, whose conversion to the Romish faith I shall speak of afterwards, were not so void of reason, but that if they compared the religion of their conquerors with their own worship, they might be persuaded to embrace the former, rather than adhere still to the latter. And although by this means they were but half converted to the truth, yet it was better that it should be thus, than that they should not have been converted at all; for by this means they were much nearer the reception of the whole truth than they were formerly, which was a great advantage; and therefore we reckon those but an ill sort of protestants, who would rather have men Turks and infidels, than of the Romish church. But at the same time, the conversion of ever so many to the church of Rome, is no argument of its not being a corrupted church, as long as we can prove it to maintain such gross errors as it does, although accompanied with such a mixture of truth as may be of great force to bring over such as had before little or no knowledge of it.

2. That the prevalence of the doctrine of the church of Rome can be no note of its being a true church, because it is so much altered from what it formerly was. The doctrine of the church of Rome was, in the beginning of Christianity, the same with that which was delivered by Christ and his apostles to the saints. Afterwards new doctrines insensibly crept into and were received by that church, and at last matters came to be settled as we now find them in the council of Trent. This has been often proved by learned men, and in some of those discourses which have of late been written,* some of the new doctrines have been traced step by step, and the manner how they came to be received set down; and in others, the church of Rome has been compared with herself, and what was determined by the council of Trent has been shown to be quite another thing from what was held some ages ago. Now it is impossible that things that are different should be the distinguishing character of that which is always the

* Barrow of the Pope's Suprem. Discourse of Transubst. Discourse concerning the Worship of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. Dis. of Communion in one Kind. Vindicat. of the Answer to some late Papers, &c.

same. Since then I suppose it will be readily granted, that the church of Rome has always been the true church, the efficacy of its doctrine can be no note thereof, since in some ages those doctrines have prevailed in it, which are directly contrary to those which have prevailed in other.

3. That the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true church, where those who embrace it are hindered from thoroughly examining it. For without a thorough examination, it never can be rightly understood; and what efficacy can it have upon his mind, who does not rightly understand it? Now the church of Rome exacts of the members of her communion a tame submission to, and compliance with, whatever she proposeth to their belief and practice; and by forbidding them the use of the Scriptures, she takes from them the use of that rule, whereby they are to judge of the reasonableness of her proposals. How then can the reception of her doctrine be a note of her being a true church, when perhaps not one amongst a thousand of her members who receive it, is capable of understanding what he is bound to believe?

4. That the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true church, where art and force are made use of to make it prevail. For it is no difficult matter for cunning deceivers to impose upon unstable souls; and it must be great courage and constancy of mind, which can make men forego father and mother, houses and land, &c. for the sake of truth. Now that the church of Rome has taken this course to propagate her doctrines, we may be assured by some of her own members. "There are, (saith Erasmus,) those who after a new example make Christians by force; but whilst they pretend the propagation of religion, they do in reality study the enlargement of riches and power. Not unlike these are those monks who inveigle others to take upon them their order, and do use a great deal of *cunning to ensnare* such as are young and *unskilful*,"* and who neither understand themselves, nor the nature of true religion. And Stapleton declares very freely, "Eo sane loco hæreses sunt," &c. "Heresies are come to that pass, that their Gordion knots are not to be dissolved by art and industry, but by the sword of Alexander; and the club of Hercules is more fit to subdue them, than the

* Erasmus in Annot. in Mat. xxiii.

harp of Apollo.”* I might quote several others to the same purpose, but the constant practices of the inquisition in those places where it is received, and the extraordinary methods which have of late been made use of in a neighbouring nation to gain proselytes, do sufficiently show that the church of Rome does more depend upon something else, than upon the efficacy of her doctrine, for the making of converts.

III^d *Answer.* This will more fully appear, if, in the third place, we consider the insufficiency of the Cardinal's arguments, which are fetched,

First, From the Scriptures.

Secondly, From what happened in the beginning of the Christian church.

Thirdly, From the particular instances which he gives of conversions wrought by those of the church of Rome.

First, As to the Scriptures which are quoted,—Psal. xix. 7, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:” and Heb. iv. 12, “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,”—it may be answered,

1. That the latter of these is by several expositors interpreted of the Son of God, and not of his doctrine.

2. That if they are both interpreted of the efficacy of any doctrine; yet that the efficacy which is spoken of is wholly internal, as we before observed, and consequently such as cannot be accounted a note of the true church. For the note of a church must be what any one can come to the knowledge of.

3. Suppose that by these words was to be understood the visible prevalency of any doctrine in the world, yet it would make nothing to the Cardinal's purpose: for that which in these Scriptural passages is said to prevail, is, “The word of God, the law of the Lord,” *i. e.* the true doctrine. But we deny the doctrine of the church of Rome to be such; and therefore these places are not applicable thereunto.

4. Were these scriptural passages applicable to the church of Rome, as having that true doctrine which is oftentimes so effica-

* Stapleton. Epist. Dedic. de Oper. Justific. Edit. Paris. 1582.

cious, yet the efficacy here expressed could be no note of the true church ; since, although, as has already been shown, the true doctrine does sometimes prevail, yet it does not follow, that it always should : for it may be perverted—it may be resisted, and error may meet with a much kinder reception in the world than truth does.

As for what Bellarmine saith in the *Second* place, concerning the prevalency of the christian doctrine in the beginning of the church, we allow it all to be true ; but we do not think the church of Rome to be more concerned in it, than any other christian church whatsoever. What then happened does very much confirm the christian doctrine in the general, but does not at all prove any particular party of Christians to be better than another, much less the church of Rome ; for although its doctrine was once the same with the doctrine of the primitive church, yet, what it was in the Cardinal's days, and is now, is quite another thing from what it was then. The primitive Christians converted the heathens from their idolatry to worship the true God ; but the great design of the catholic missionaries is to render their proselytes entirely submissive to the pope of Rome in all things.

I might here conclude, did not the Cardinal insist much upon the particular conversions wrought by those of the church of Rome ; upon some of which, in the *Third* place, I shall make some brief reflections.

Now as to the conversion of the English, by Augustin the monk ; it may be replied,

1. That the Centurists (out of whom he quotes this and the other instances) do expressly say, that “Augustin eas ecclesias magis deformavit quam recte instituit ;”^{*} literally, “He disfigured rather than rightly established these churches.”

2. That this was not such a general conversion as seems to be pretended ; for, as has been lately cleared up by a very learned man,[†] the faith was here planted during the apostles' times, and in all probability by St. Paul, rather than by St. Peter, or any one else. Besides, Bede[‡] gives us an account of Germanus, Lupus, and Severus, coming over hither to reclaim the Britons from the heresy of Pelagius, several years before the arrival of Augustin,[§] and that at his coming over, several British bishops met him at

^{*} Cent. 6. c. 2, p. 37.

[†] Dr. Still. Origin. Britan. c. 1.

[‡] Bede, lib. i. cap. 17 et 21.

[§] Lib. ii. c. 2. Origin. Britan. c. 5, p. 357.

Augustinsac, and stoutly refused all submission, either to the church of Rome, or to him. Lastly, although he might be very instrumental towards the conversion of the Saxons in Kent, yet was he even in that affair mightily assisted by the authority of a christian queen named Bertha,* and a Christian bishop named Luidhardus.

3. That the doctrine which Augustin taught,† being the doctrine of Gregory the Great, is vastly different from what has been since taught in the church of Rome.

4. That Augustin's proud carriage towards the British bishops, and the death of one thousand two hundred monks of Bangor,‡ occasioned by their denial of subjection to him, sufficiently show of what temper he was, and that he thought it lawful to make use of other means, besides the efficacy of his doctrine, to promote what he was sent hither by the pope about.§

The next mission which the Cardinal makes mention of, is that of Kilianus, by Pope Conon, who converted the people of Franconia, whose chief city was Herbipolis, or Wirtzburg. Now the account that the Centuriators give of this Kilianus, and which makes him not to have had that success in the conversion of people as is pretended, is this, viz. That being a monk, and a Scottish man, and not being able to do any good amongst his own countrymen with his preaching up of new rites and ceremonies, he passed over into Germany, to see what he could do there; and finding that at Wirtzburg, the governor Gosbertus gave him but little encouragement, he being one, who, as historians relate, "did abhor those popish ceremonies" which Kilianus taught, he went to Rome, and got the pope to make him bishop of that city, hoping that at his return thither with greater authority, he should be better received; but was soon slain by his auditors.||

The third instance is, the conversion of a great part of Germany by Vinofrid, otherwise called Boniface, who seemed a little to mistrust the efficacy of his doctrine, when he thus wrote: "That

* Bede, lib. i. cap. 25.

† Vindicat. of the Ans. of some late Papers, p. 72, &c.

‡ Bede, lib. ii. cap. 2.

§ Galfridus Monumet. Hist. Brit. lib. xi. cap. 12. et. 13.

|| Centur. Magdeb. Cent. 7. p. 516.

without the command and awe of the prince of the Francks, he could not be able to hinder the pagan rites and idol-sacrileges in Germany:”* and as the Centuriators tell us,† entered the country of the Thuringi with an army, forcing them to take refuge in a fortified place: and, when they were willing to turn Christians upon no other conditions than that of their being freed from paying tenths for the future to the king of Hungary, gratified them therein.

Of the conversion of the Vandals, which he ascribes to the monks of Corbie, hear the account that Albertus Krantzius gives. “The Vandals,”‡ says he, “were a nation singularly given to the superstitious worship of their idols, till by the *arms* of the king of Denmark by sea, by those of the Pomeranian on the east, and those of other christian princes on the south, they were *forced* to become Christian. As to the conversion of the Danes,§ we are told, that Harald being beaten by Regner, and having no other hopes, fled for help to Ludovicus the emperor, then at Mentz, who refused to assist him upon any other condition, than that of his turning Christian, which he and his people accordingly did. And as for the Bulgarians, Sclavonians, &c. besides that they were converted by their neighbour Greeks, as well as Italians, especially the Bulgarians (whose disturbance from some western missionaries Photius|| passionately laments), it is not a sign that they were made so subject to the Popes of Rome, as is pretended; since, as the Centuriators tell us, when Pope Nicholas would have obliged the Sclavonians and Polonians,¶ (whom Cyrillus and Methodius, who converted them, had taught to have their public service in their own tongue), to have it in Latin, they stoutly resisted him. So that the pope, that he might keep up his usurped authority, was forced to pretend that he gave them leave to have it in their own language.

But amongst all his instances, the Cardinal had least reason to have mentioned the conversion of the Indians and Jews. For as for the Indians, the unheard-of cruelties which even the popish historians relate to have been used towards them, and their gross

* Bonif. Ep. 3. † Cent. 8. pp. 21, 22. ‡ Lib. i. cap. 1.

§ Saxo-Gram. Hist. Dan. lib. ix. p. 158. Alb. Krantzii Metr. lib. i. cap. 19

|| Ep. ii. ¶ Cent. 9. cap. 2. col. 18.

ignorance after their conversion, are a sufficient evidence how little they were for this conversion to the *doctrine* which was taught them. One would wonder how it were possible for mankind to be guilty of such inhuman barbarities, as Bartolomæus Casas, who was bishop, and lived in India, relates the Spaniards to have committed. In abhorrence of which, Acosta has a discourse* on purpose to show the unreasonableness of making war against the barbarians on account of religion. He afterwards discourses of the capacities of the Indians, asserting that they ought to have better instructors sent them. That those which they then had were of such little use to them, that after the space of forty years, there were scarce any found amongst so great a number of converts, who understood two articles of the Creed,† or had any apprehension what Christ, eternal life, or the eucharist meant. But this concerning the conversion of the Indians has already been mentioned in Note the Fourth.

As for the manner of converting the Jews, I shall only mention one instance which happened in the time of Heraclius the emperor, who wrote to Dagobert the king of France,‡ “that he would command all the Jews in his dominions to turn Christians, and either to *banish or slay those who would not*; who accordingly did so, banishing as many as would not be baptized.” Since Erasmus, who knew these matters well enough, has so freely declared, that although their conversion be a thing much to be wished for, yet that such courses were taken by some to effect it, that “of a wicked Jew it often happened there was made a Christian much more wicked than he was before his conversion.”§

Having thus shown the weakness of the Cardinal’s arguments, all that I shall add upon this subject, shall be only this, that since the chief patrons of the Romish cause do at this time endeavour to disguise their religion with so much artifice, and to represent it as much like ours as they can; they do really think their doctrine by its own worth and excellency then most likely to prevail, when it is made appear to be most akin to that of the reformed churches.

* Lib. ii. cap. 2, &c. De Ind. salut. procur.

† Lib. iv. cap. 3, p. 358.

‡ Aimoin. iv. 22.

§ Erasmi Annot. in Matt. xxiii.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

THE SIXTH NOTE.

AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE WITH THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

	PAGE
This is acknowledged as a true mark of a Church	149
It must be first known that the present Romish Church agrees with the Primitive, before it can be known that she is infallible.	<i>ibid.</i>
The true Church only to be discovered by the true Faith	150, 151
Those matters of faith in dispute between the Romanists and Protestants to be determined by the doctrines and practices of the Primitive Church	151—153
The Romanists, avoiding the discussion of particular points which could be comprehended by most capacities, such as whether prayers ought to be in an unknown tongue, whether the Scriptures ought to be read by the people, &c., run into abstruse and general controversies, such as about infallibility, church authority, resolution of faith, &c.	153
Protestants willing to let the contest be decided by the fact, whether they or the Romanists most agree with the Primitive Church	154
Luther and Calvin misrepresented	155
The Apostolic Church the true standard of the Christian Church, and the Scriptures the only authentic records of this	156
Several doctrines examined by antiquity.	
1. Papal supremacy not allowed by the first council of Nice, or that of Constantinople, or of Chalcedon	157, 158
2. Transubstantiation acknowledged even by many of the schoolmen not have been the doctrine of the Primitive Church	158, 159
First introduced a little before the time of Berengarius, and not well to understood even by those who held it	159, 160
The recantation of Berengarius, and the commentary upon it	160
The number of the sacraments not declared to be seven by the Primitive Church, nor mentioned by any author till 1100 years after Christ . .	<i>ibid.</i>
The necessity of auricular confession doubted by learned men in the time of Peter Lombard	161
Purgatory not mentioned by any ancient writers	<i>ibid.</i>

	PAGE
Indulgences a new doctrine	161
Prayers and offerings for the dead, though an ancient practice, yet no doctrine of the Primitive Church, and utterly subversive of the doctrine of purgatory	161, 162
The worship of saints, angels, the Virgin, or of images, and the prayers in an unknown tongue, never the practice any where of the Primitive Church	162
All these doctrines of the Roman church which distinguish it from the Reformed, proved not to have been doctrines of the Primitive Church—	
1. From their expurgatory indices	163
2. From their correcting or rather corrupting the writings of the fathers, and counterfeiting so many false ones, and obtruding spurious authors on the world	163, 164
3. From the little regard they often show for Antiquity, whenever it makes against them	165
4. From the decrees of the <i>present</i> church, which alone they adhere to, and which they prefer to the <i>Primitive</i> Church	166, 186

SEVENTH NOTE.

THE UNION OF THE MEMBERS AMONG THEMSELVES, AND WITH THE HEAD.

Unity is no note or proper character of a true Church, because it is found in societies of different natures, and contrary designs	169
The Union of the Church is of all others the most excellent, though not, therefore, necessarily a proper <i>note</i> of the true Church.	<i>ibid.</i>
Wherein this Unity consists according to Bellarmine	170
Three things observed on this :—	
I. That the unity here stated is no true Note of the Church, because <i>Union with the Pope</i> , as head of the Church, has no foundation in Scripture, reason, or antiquity	171
1. No foundation in Scripture	171—174
2. Nor in reason	174
3. Nor in antiquity	175
The Cardinal's argument for the necessity of this Union, from experience, considered	178
The <i>Union</i> which they pretend <i>among themselves</i> as members, no certain note of the Church	179
Because, 1. This is no more than what any society may have as well as the true Church, and any other Church may have as well as the Roman	179, 180
2. As there may be this Union out of the true Church, so it may not be within it	180

	PAGE
II. If Unity were a true Note of the Church, yet the Roman Church has it not; which is probably true of the first, and most certainly true of the second branch of the Cardinal's Unity	181
1. It is probable there is not now, and has not been for many ages, any true Pope, for the Church to be united to	<i>ibid.</i>
2. Neither is there that Unity in points of doctrine among the Papists, or such a Union of Members, as shall prevent some from breaking away from the communion of the rest	181, 182
Nor that wonderful agreement, as the Cardinal pretends, in the writers of their Church, nor in the decrees of their lawful councils, nor in those of their Popes	182
Several disputes between the Canonists and the Schoolmen, about material points of doctrine	183
Bellarmine's answer to all this, viz. that they differ not in those things that belong to faith, considered	184
The Cardinal's difference between the division of heretics from the Church, and a division from heresy	185
Whether there is in the Church of Rome a certain rule for ending controversies, viz. the sentence of the chief Pastor, or the definition of a general council	186
The greatest controversies in the Roman Church were about these very means	<i>ibid.</i>
This shown from an Epistle of Launoy's	186—189
III. That Unity which is indeed a Note of the Church, Protestants have, and in a greater degree than the Romanists	190
The true grounds and notions of Church Unity represented:—	
1. Unity of submission to one head, Christ	<i>ibid.</i>
2. Unity of professing the common faith delivered to the Saints, grounded on the authority of Scripture, and summarily expounded in the ancient creed	<i>ibid.</i>
3. Unity of Sacraments in the Church	190, 191
4. Unity of obedience to the laws and institutions of Christ	191
5. Unity of Christian affection and kindness	<i>ibid.</i>
6. Unity of discipline and government	<i>ibid.</i>
7. Unity of communion in the service and worship of God	<i>ibid.</i>
Some (though not all) of these necessary to the being of a Church, viz. the acknowledgment of our Lord, the profession of one faith, and the admission into the state of christian duties and privileges by one baptism	192

	PAGE
Those particular Churches that keep Unity in all these respects better than others do, have the mark of Ecclesiastical Unity in a higher degree than those others have	192
The Church of Rome, as far as she holds one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, is so far part of the Catholic Church, and so far maintains Catholic Unity.	<i>ibid.</i>
Wherein she departs from Catholic Unity, Purity, and Charity, shown in several instances	193
The Church of England not chargeable in the same way	193, 194
Unity of Communion in the Church of Rome is Unity of Communion among themselves, but not a Catholic Unity of Communion, because many of the terms of it are unlawful and unjust	195
The contrary is the case of the Church of England	195, 196

THE EIGHTH NOTE.

SANCTITY OF DOCTRINE.

That this note, as well as others, is far from performing what is promised for it by the Cardinal, is made evident by four particulars.	198
I. Though that Church which has least error and corruption in its doctrine and discipline is the best and purest, yet it is not the only true Church	198, 199
II. That Sanctity of Doctrine, viz. a pure profession of true religion without any mixture of error, is no true note or character whereby a man may distinguish the true Church from all false Churches	199
This evident from the necessary properties of all true Notes, which are four :	
1. Every true Note ought to be common to all of the same kind with the thing which it notifies	200—202
2. Every true Note ought to be peculiar to that kind of thing of which it is a note, and not common to other things of another kind	203
3. Every true Note ought to be more known than the thing which it notifies	204, 205
4. Every true Note ought to be inseparable from the thing it notifies	205—208
III. To profess all the essential articles of the Christian faith, and receive all the essential parts of Christian worship and discipline, is the true Note of a Church	209, 210
The Church of England willing to be tried by this criterion.	
IV. According to the principles of the Roman Church, the true Church is not to be found by this Note, in whatever sense we understand it	210, 211

This proved in four particulars :—

First particular. The Church of Rome decries private judgment as insufficient to distinguish truth from falsehood, in matters of religion 211, 212

Second particular. She allows no sufficient rule beyond the true Church, to guide private judgment 212, 213

The question which is the true Church, not to be solved by principles of nature but of revelation 213

No other rule than Scripture to direct us in this inquiry, while we are out of the pale of the Church *ibid.*

The Church of Rome says Scripture is insufficient for two reasons :—

First reason, because Scripture is not full enough as to all doctrines of faith and manners ; and therefore there are certain unwritten traditions in the Church of equal authority with it, and by which its defects are supplied 213, 214

Second reason, because it is not clear enough, hence we cannot be certain of its meaning without the interpretation of the Church . . . 214

Third particular. The Church of Rome resolves all certainty as to matter of faith into the authority of the true Church, which is the fundamental principle of Popery 215

A short dialogue on this point, between a Papist and a Protestant . 215—217

Fourth particular. The Church of Rome gives authority to the true Church, to impose on us a necessity of believing such things as men were not obliged to believe before 217—219

THE NINTH NOTE.

EFFICACY OF DOCTRINE.

By Efficacy of Doctrine two things understood, either the power of the word of God to dispose particular men's hearts to believe aright, and live well, or the success it has to draw numbers to the true doctrine ; the first cannot be known, and the second is too uncertain 221

Many other things besides Efficacy of Doctrine have converted, and may convert nations to Christianity, such as force, which was used by Charlemagne 222, 223

The early conversions very different from this sort of conversion . . 223, 224

Three answers to the Cardinal's argument :—

I. *Answer,* The prevalency of *any* doctrine can be no Note of a true Church, for three reasons,

First reason, From what our Saviour has said 224, 225

Second reason, The temper and constitution of mankind . . . 225—227

Third reason, Matter of fact—error being as prevalent as truth. 227—229

This appears from the diffusion of Arianism, Mahometanism, and other doctrines. 229—231

	PAGE
II. <i>Answer</i> , The prevalency of the <i>Romish</i> doctrine is no note of its being true, for four reasons:—	
1st reason, Because of the great intermixture of error with truth in it.	231, 232
2d reason, Because the <i>Romish</i> doctrine is so much altered from what it formerly was	232
3d reason, Because the <i>Romish</i> Church hinders those who embrace the doctrine from thoroughly examining it; and 4th reason, because art and force have been sometimes used to make it prevail .	233
III. <i>Answer</i> , The Cardinal's arguments to prove this his Note shown to be insufficient,—	
First, His argument from Scriptures insufficient	234
Secondly, his argument from the prevalency of the Christian doctrine in the beginning of the Church, insufficient	235
Thirdly, his argument from the practical conversions wrought by those of the <i>Romish</i> Church insufficient, as the conversion of the British, by Augustine	235, 236
The conversion of the Franconians, by Kilianus	236
The conversion of great part of Germany, by Vinofin or Boniface . . .	237
The conversion of the Vandals, Danes, Indians, Jews, &c. effected by force	237, 238

THE
TENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
HOLINESS OF LIFE.*

BY ARCHBISHOP TENISON

IN this argument it may suffice, if it be shown,

I. What the notion of holiness is.

II. That holiness is not properly a note of the true church.

III. That if it were a note of the true church, yet it would not so belong to the Roman as to distinguish it from all other churches; and to appear upon it as the infallible character of the only fold of Christ.

I. Holiness is of two kinds—holiness of *calling* and *dedication*; of *mind* and *morals*.

By holiness of calling and dedication, I mean the separation of persons from the unbelieving and wicked world, and the incorporation of them by baptism into the spiritual society of the christian church; and by such means the dedication of them to the service of Christ, according to the tenor of the evangelical covenant.

In this sense St. Paul told the members of the church of Corinth, that they were “washed and sanctified,”† or, by their christian calling or dedication, made sacred and holy.

* “Decima Nota est Sanctitas Vitæ Auctorum, sive primorum Patrum nostræ religionis.” BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 13.

† 1 Cor. vi. 11.

By holiness of mind and morals, to which Bellarmine here gives the name of *probity* (a virtue commended by him, but coldly obeyed) I understand the habitual, private and public practice of christian religion, as it proceeds from the true principle of it—the love of God, as it is measured by the true rule of it, right reason in conjunction with the revealed will of God; and as it is directed to its proper ends—the glory of God, and the good of all reasonable creatures. For this kind of holiness St. Paul makes pious application to God in behalf of the Thessalonians, saying, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

II. Neither of these kinds of holiness can be properly called a note of the true church.

For the first kind; it is confessed that the christian church is holy, and it was called holy in the creed, before the epithet of *catholic* was inserted into that sum of faith.† And the supreme pastor of the church loved it in such an extraordinary manner, that “He gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, [by baptism, and assent to the doctrine and conditions of the gospel] that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing [anything which may seem uncomely to Christ, to whom she as supreme head is united]: that it should be holy, and without blemish.‡

This holiness of dedication is elegantly set forth (after the manner of the oriental poesy) in the book of the Canticles, in which is represented the spiritual marriage of Christ and his chaste and unblemished church; though some Romanists have wrested these and other places which speak of her dove-like and undefiled nature, and apply them to that which they please to call the immaculate

* 1 Thess. v. 23.

† S. Cypr. Epist. 70, p. 190,—“cum dicimus [h. e. Baptizandis] credis in vitam æternam, et remissionem peccatorum per sanctam ecclesiam?” “When we say to those about to be baptized, Dost thou believe in eternal life, and the remission of sins through the *holy church*?”

‡ Ephes. v. 25—27.

conception of the blessed Virgin.* So ready are they who upbraid the reformed with interpreting Scripture out of their own heads, to do the same thing themselves, and with a much greater mixture of extravagance.

That the church is holy, we daily profess : nevertheless, such holiness of the church cannot properly be called a note of it, for it appertains to its essence and constitution, and shows what a church is, and belongs to every church, whether Greek, Abyssinian, Roman, or English ; and is not (according to Bellarmine's sense of a note) an external mark by which we may distinguish betwixt churches, and upon grounds of good assurance discern any true one from such as are false.

For the second kind of holiness, that of mind and manners ; neither is that, so far as man can take cognizance of it, a certain sign by which we may find out the true christian society ; for,

First, The officers of the christian church invite men of all nations and conditions to come into the bosom of it, and admit them upon their profession of the common Christianity, as not being able to penetrate into the secrets of their hearts, or to foresee whether they who are now in good earnest will persevere or fall away. They may, therefore, admit into the true fold such as are wolves in sheep's clothing ; for Novatian himself did not deny that men could be secretly wicked before and at baptism, though he was so rigid as not to believe the sins committed after it to be forgiven. Hence our Saviour compared his church to a *net* which contained in it *good* and *bad* fishes ; and the bad may either soon appear, or be long concealed under the close veil of hypocrisy : so deceitful a mark of incorruption in the monument is the superficial whiteness and ornament of it. Bellarmine himself does here furnish us, from Theodoret, with the instance of Nestorius, who, by the help of a pale look, set speech, and grave apparel, deceived both the people and the officers of the church ; and, by such arts, lifted himself into an episcopal chair. “ Now he is not a Christian who is merely one outwardly ; neither is that complete baptism which is outwardly only in the flesh ; but he is a Christian who is

• V. Cotan Preuves par l'écriture du contenu en la Foy catholique, p. 1.

also one inwardly ; and baptism is that which is likewise inward in the spirit ; whose praise is not only of men, but of God."

Besides, where there is no such gross hypocrisy, there may be a specious show of holiness, not uniform and entire, yet proceeding from devout temper, some seeds of natural reason, and some few principles of christian religion, whilst the rest are not embraced. Thus it was with the sect of Priscillian, who observing some kinds of real strictnesses upbraided the looseness of that age ; yet the catholic Christians did not infer the soundness of that party from the regularity of their lives.

Likewise there are some practices which both the persons and the spectators judge to be holy, which are not so. Such a practice was that of Ignatius Loyola, who gave alms readily to a poor man, and to all the rest who upon that poor man's report pressed immediately upon him, till he had emptied all his stock, and was forced that night to beg bread himself.* This charity, how indiscreet soever it was, moved the poor to cry out with much admiration, as Maffei relates, "A saint ! a saint !"

Seeing, then, the weak will mistake the very nature of holiness, and the most judicious can only see the external part of it, it is not safe to argue for the goodness of the cause from the seeming goodness of the life. It is true, we ought to use judicious charity ; but in a case where we are proving our faith it becomes us to proceed upon more unquestionable grounds.

Secondly, Under the same constitution, people may live sometimes with more, and sometimes with less morality. If, therefore, we should prove the state or the church by the manners of the members, the same constitution, at different times, would be good and bad, and vary as men do. Bellarmine speaks of the holiness of doctrine, and the efficacy of it ; but this holiness is not irresistibly efficacious : and often we find worse men under better circumstances, and better men under worse. Thus it falls out in civil societies, where the model remaining, or being improved, the virtues of the subjects decline. It did so towards the latter end of the Roman empire, in which, though the laws remained, the dregs of Romulus began to rise again. Thus it was in the church of Israel, which was always, as God had framed it, a true church :

* Maffei in Vita Ignat. lib. i. pp. 74, 75.

but if holiness of life had been made a note of it, it might, in some junctures, have been called a church, but oftener no church at all. Before their captivity, there was a general corruption of manners, and their reformation, upon their deliverance, was imperfect, and the sense of God's goodness to them began to wear off; and though they did forbear to adulterate the worship of the true God with mixtures of idolatry, yet they admitted much of the ceremonial religion of the Pharisees, which made void real and solid piety; insomuch, that when our Saviour visited the world, he could scarce find any *probity* in it.

There are many ways by which men, under the same constitution, may lead more or less virtuous lives: such are the good or bad examples of great men; strict or loose discipline; affliction or over-growth in wealth and power; war or peace: and the last of these is too often, though not the just cause, yet the occasion of security, and of the growth of a kind of slothful rust upon those who are at ease. St. Cyprian, speaking of the quiet the African church had for a few years, (from Severus to Decius), though not without some trouble from the heathens, complains of the corruption which it bred among Christians.*

Thirdly, Add to this, that unless a man do first understand the nature and doctrine of the christian church, he cannot know what *sanctity* is, and what that is in the life of any man, which he is to take for the holiness of a Christian. So that the way to be well assured about a true church, is to take our measures not from the lives of the members, but from the doctrines of their society. And one might imagine that Cardinal Perron himself, in this argument, had more regard to the doctrine than the life, when he alluded to an expression in the Canticles in this fanciful manner,—“The church sings, and will always sing, I am black, but I am fair; that is to say, I am black in manners, but fair in doctrine.”† Which blackness of manners, if he intended as a spot of beauty upon his fair doctrine, he did not see with christian eyes. But,

III. Admitting that holiness of life were a note of the true

* S. Cypr. Serm. de Lapsiss. p. 123. Ox. . “—— Pax longa corruerat jacentem fidem, et pœne dixeram dormitantem,” &c. “Long peace had corrupted the reclining, and I had almost said slumbering faith.”

† Cardinal Perron's Reply to King James, lib. iv. c. 6.

church, the Roman church would not, from this concession, derive any great advantage. It is true, and it is granted,

First, That at the beginning, the Christians at Rome were famous both for their faith and manners; and no man that I know of asperseth Linus, the first bishop there, who, as Platina saith, had a mighty reputation for sanctity, and died a glorious martyr under Saturninus the consul. But the like may be alleged in favour of the mother church of Jerusalem, and of St. James, the bishop of it. In the mean while, it may be noted, that in Rome, it being the imperial city, there was a very early affectation of such superiority as Christ forbade in his kingdom: and St. Jerome, at the same time* that he takes notice of the right faith of Rome (for then it was contained within the limits of the Apostles' Creed), reproves that ambition which had seated itself in purple on the seven hills. And this leaven had before that time swelled the contentious popes, Victor and Stephen.

Secondly, It must be farther acknowledged, that in the later ages there have been men of that communion devoutly inclined, and of good morals; but this effect has not had popery for its cause, but has been derived from principles common to all Christians; and it is from the influence of the first twelve articles, and not of the additional ones of Trent, that such men have been so pious, and so free from blemish. In this number are usually put Thaulerus and Savanarola; and it appears by their words, that mere Romanism was not the spring from which their devotions flowed.

"There be many," saith Thaulerus, "who go under the name of religious, who take great pains in set fasts, vigils, orisons, and frequent confessions; for they believe they may be justified and saved merely by such external works."† As for Savanarola, his spirit may be discerned by such discourse as this;‡ "I never was delighted with such books as the revelations of St. Brigid, or abbot Joachim. I never read the former; and the latter very sparingly. The reading of the Old and New Testament pleaseth me so much, that for many years I have used

* St. Jerome, Epist. ad Marcellam. p. 127.

† Thauler. in Fest. de uno aliquo Confess. Luc. xi.

‡ Compend. Revelat. Savan. pp. 271—273.

no other book, being disgusted, as I may say, with other writings. Not that I despise them, but that in comparison of the Scriptures, all such sweet things taste to me as bitter." Neither,

Thirdly, Have the reformed so much of the Pharisee as to justify themselves, and say, that in all *their* field there has not been a *tare*. But the men have been in fault, and not the cause. God be merciful to us sinners, greater sinners than some others upon one account, inasmuch as we offend against clearer light: yet it may be here noted, that Bellarmine has put into his catalogue of sinners, Simon Magus, Valentine, Marcion, Montanus, and such others as do not at all belong to us; and that he and other Romanists misrepresent Luther, blackening him with slanderous art, and then exposing him as a perfect Ethiopian. He was indeed a man of warm temper, and uncourtly language: but (besides that he had his education among those who so vehemently reviled him) it may be considered, whether in passing through so very rough a sea, it was not next to impossible for him not to beat the insulting waves till they foamed again.

He had his infirmities, but *his* are taken notice of, whilst more candour is shown to men of great name, and well nigh equal heat. To omit the fierce words which passed between Chrysostom and Epiphanius, St. Jerome and Ruffinus; it is manifest that Lucifer, bishop of Calaris in Sardinia (who was much esteemed by pope Liberius, and who is called Holy Lucifer, according to the style of the time in which he lived), wrote books against his own emperor Constantius, which were one entire invective. And when (for instance sake) he pleased to call him, most impudent emperor,* I suppose he had not a better talent than Luther in the address of courts. There was, therefore, something else which sharpened the tongues and pens of many against Luther: Erasmus tells us, "That he perceived the better any man was, the more he relished the writings of Luther;† that his very enemies allowed him to be a man of good life; that he seemed to him to have in his breast certain eminent evangelical sparks; that it was

* Luc. Calar. ad Constant. pro S. Athan. lib. i. p. 25. "Responde Imperator Impudentissime," &c. p. 39. "Filius Pestilentiaë," &c. p. 102. "Qui sis non solum mendax sed homicida:" Son of Pestilence, who art not only a liar but a homicide.

† Erasm. Epist. ad Albert. Episc. et Prin. Mogunt. Cardin. pp. 584, 585.

plain that some condemned those things in Luther's writings, which, in St. Augustine's and St. Bernard's works passed for orthodox and pious.

The same Erasmus pointed to the true reason of this usage of Luther.* He said he had two faults, "he touched the monks' bellies, and the pope's crown."

There have been much worse men than Luther in all parties, and particularly in the Roman church, which, if search were made for a society by the marks of holy life, would not, above all others, be embraced. And,

First, Thus much may appear from the complaints of corruption in the Latin church, made in so many places, by so many considerable persons, and with such deep resentment.

Many books have been professedly written upon that subject; such as those of Clemangis, "Of the corrupt State of the Church;" of Alvarez Pelagius, "Of the Plainct of the Church;" of Picus Mirandula, "Concerning the Reformation of the Church," offered to the fathers of the council of Lateran; and of Petrus de Aliaco, Cardinal of Cambray, presented by him in the council of Constance. Others have, in particular places, though not in an entire work, given vent to their grievances upon the like occasion.

How black are the characters which are given of the state of the Latin church by Baronius,† by Bellarmine,‡ by Genebrard,§ about the year 900, and so forwards for more than a hundred years! Baronius speaks of *monsters* intruded into the holy see, and by the *help of monsters*; for such were John X. and Theodora who advanced him. Bellarmine represents the popes of those times as degenerating from the piety of their predecessors, of which some had no very great share; and he says, that in the west, and almost all the world over (and especially amongst those who were called the faithful), faith had failed; and that there was no fear of God among them. He mentions the vision of Pachomius the abbot, who, it seems, saw monasteries increasing

* Carion. in Chron. Auct. a Peuc. lib. v.

† Baron. Annal. ad ann. 900. p. 650, et ad ann. 912. N. viii. p. 685. N. xiv. p. 689. Edit. Col.

‡ Bellarm. Chronol. ad ann. 1026. p. 93, et de Sacram. lib. i. cap. 8. de gemit. Columbæ, pp. 192, 208, 209, 392.

§ Genebr. Chronol. ad ann. 901.

and piety decreasing; and he applies the vision to his age; and, upon that occasion, he useth the words of the prophet, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, but not increased their joy." Genebrard reports, that for almost 150 years, the popes were rather *apostatical* than *apostolical*. So dismal a state of things might, if he had pleased, been reproved more solemnly than with a chime of words. St. Bernard thus laments, and reproveth the looseness of his age: "Woe to this generation, because of hypocrisy; if that may be called hypocrisy, which for the abundance of it cannot, and for its impudence does not, desire to be concealed."* In the book called "The Ceremonial for the Election of Popes,"† there is deep complaint of such corruption, as in the phrase of that book, "caused the pillar of the church to shake." In our own kingdom the Norman invasion has been, in great measure, imputed to the decay of learning and piety in that age, in which, "the priests could scarce stammer out mass: he was esteemed a prodigy in learning who understood grammar; the great ones frequented not the church; all sorts of people were given to shameful intemperance."‡ In a word, for many years together before the council of Trent (which acted contrary to the design for which it was, by good men, desired), no voices were more frequent and more loud in the Roman church, than the cries for reformation. But,

Secondly, To pass by general complaints, we may furnish ourselves with abundance of instances, in the lives of particular men of that communion, who have been infamous for impiety. And because Bellarmine is pleased to send us to the fathers and doctors of his church for examples of holiness, we will thither go, observing three things by the way: First, That he has put the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles into his catalogue, though they are more ours than his. Secondly, That he has forborne the mention of any one pope, lest he should have put us upon inquiring after the rest. Thirdly, That he could not be ignorant of the history of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were esteemed great doctors and reverend fathers in the Jewish church, and sat in the chair of Moses, but "said and did not;" and dishonoured that

* St. Bern. Serm. xxxiii. in Cant. p. 673.

† Cer. de Elect. Pont. p. 17.

‡ G. Malms. in Wil. I. lib. iii. p. 102.

true church, but had upon them no note of real sanctity, by which they might commend it.

My business is not to write a history of the lives of popes, or of the founders of monastic orders. I shall content myself with a few reflections upon two or three of this sort of men, with whom the more the world is acquainted, the less veneration it will have for them.

I will not be partial, but begin with an eminent man, Pope Gregory the Great, who is said to be the last of the good popes, and the first of the bad. This man took upon him to give Augustine the monk authority over the British bishops, who were strangers to him, and never under the yoke either of him or his predecessors. He fawned upon the emperor Mauritius whilst he lived and prospered, and owned him as his patron and the maker of his fortunes,* even before he had made his own; but as soon as the emperor and his family were barbarously murdered by the most bloody vassal and usurper Phocas, Gregory insulted over this dead lion, and flattered this living monster,† and his most immoral wife Leontia.‡ He used such words at his usurped exaltation, as he did at that which he called the conversion of England;§ singing profanely, “Glory to God in the highest,” — “Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.” He exercised also his talent of unchristian flattery towards Brunichild, queen of France,|| who was stained in the blood of ten crowned heads, and against whom Lucilius, if alive, could not write a suitable satire.

* St. Greg. lib. i. Ep. 1. fol. 356, par. 1523; lib. ii. Ep. 61, fol. 373. “Ex illo jam tempore dominus meus fuisti, quando adhuc dominus non eras.”

† Ep. 43. lib. xi. fol. 441. “Quantas Omnip. Dom. laudes debemus, quod remoto jugo Tristitiæ, ad Libertatis tempora, sub imperiali benignitatis vestræ pietate, pervenimus,” &c. “What praises do we owe to the Lord Almighty, that through his removing the yoke of sadness, we have arrived at times of freedom, under the imperial piety of thy benignity.”

‡ Ep. 44. lib. xi. fol. 441. “Quæ lingua,” &c.

§ Ep. 58. lib. ix. fol. 431. “ad Aug. Episc. Angl. de Convers. Gentis. “Gloria in Excelsis,” &c. Lib. xi. p. 441. Ep. 36. Greg. Phocæ. Augusto. “Gloria in excelsis Deo qui, juxta quod scriptum est, mutat tempora et transfert regna,” &c. Lætentur Cæli et exultet terra.”

|| Lib. v. Ep. 59. fol. 392. Greg. Brun. Excellentie vestræ Christianitas, &c.

If now, even in the Life of St. Gregory the Great, we want the note of sufficient probity, at what loss must we be in the life of such an one as Pope John XII. who, in a synod held at Rome,* was formally accused before Otho the Great of these horrible crimes—viz. “The ordaining a deacon in a stable; the committing of adultery and incest; the putting out the eyes of a holy man; the drinking a health to the god of this world; the invoking of Jupiter and Venus when he was at dice, in favour of his cast. The synod sate, the witnesses were ready, his presence was urged by the emperor and the synod. He refused to appear; and instead of purging himself, he sent this menace to the synod, ‘That if the fathers deposed him, he would excommunicate all of them, and make them incapable of ordaining and of celebrating of mass?’”

This is testified by Luitprandus, upon whose word Bellarmine concludes the sanctity of Pope Formosus;† and therefore, against him at least, he is author sufficient for the wickedness of Pope John.

This surpriseth not those observing men who look into the inside of the consistory, and see those evil arts by which elections are often made; arts, some of which the *ceremoniale* itself does not dissemble.‡

Touching the sanctity of founders of orders, St. Dominic is one of Bellarmine’s great examples; but he must excuse the reformed world, if it will not take a blot for an admirable figure.

Pope Innocent dreamed that Dominic was chosen as a prop to the Lateran building, which, without the aid his shoulders gave it, would have fallen to the ground: as if his holiness had not been pillar enough for the supporting of it; for perhaps he was as omnipotent as he was infallible. Yet, after all this, he was a trumpeter in that holy war against the innocent Albigenses, in

* Luitprand. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 6—10, p. 153—158.

† Bell. Chron. ann. 891, p. 83.

‡ Cer. de Elect. Pont. p. 17. “Denique per quot Simoniacæ Hæresis Trapezitas, repetitis malleis, crebrisque invasionibus subjacuit!” “How often, through many money brokers of simoniacal heresy, has it been subjected to repeated blows and inroads!”—Vide in p. 37. Bull. Julii 2, “Contra simoniace electos, et simoniace eligentes:” “Against those simoniacally elected and electing.”

which both swords of the spiritual and temporal power were used, to the ruin of so many families, and the loss of so many lives, in a very barbarous manner ; the consciences of those people having moved them to bear testimony against the corruptions of Rome.*

For some other orders, every eye cannot see their boasted contempt of the world, which is so much talked of, and so seldom found. The readiest way, in the ecclesiastical state, to grow considerable in the world, is first to enter into some of the orders. And for example sake, it was some while ago the boast of some men, that there had been of St. Benedict's order,† twenty-four popes, one hundred and eighty-three cardinals, and one thousand five hundred and seventy abbots.

The austerities and mortifications of such orders are generally mentioned as proofs of their extraordinary holiness ; yet you will find even among the heathens, as great rigours as amongst the severest in their cloisters. The Jesuits, in their late voyage to Siam, have furnished us with an instance in the pagan *Tapolins* of that country, who in such strictnesses, seem not inferior to St. Bruno himself. “They have an estate of life, not much unlike to his, called *Vipasana*,‡ in which they keep perpetual silence, and give themselves up to the contemplation of holy things. The Jesuits assure us, that they reproached the Romans for want of sufficient veneration of sacred images, holy writings, and priests.§ They tell us, that for that which concerns their manners and conduct of life, a Christian can teach nothing more perfect than that which their religion prescribes. That it forbids the impiety of every thought ; that what are counsels among Christians, are, with *Tapolins*, indispensable precepts ; that they forbid the use of any liquor which may intoxicate ; that they drink no wine upon any occasion ; that they are extremely scandalized at christian priests for drinking it ; that they are charitable to beasts, and relieve them in their needs ;|| that they take great pains in preaching, and educating youth, in their monasteries,

* V. Thuan. Hist. lib. vi. ad ann. 1550. pp. 186, 187. Æmil. lib. vi. de Reb. Gest. Francor.

† Valaterani Anthropol. lib. xxi. p. 753.

‡ Voyage de Siam. lib. vi. p. 412. “On ne peut rien voir de plus austère,” &c.

§ Ib. p. 410.

|| Ib. pp. 414—416.

shaving them, putting on them a habit, causing them to fast, forbidding them to sing or play, or hear singers, or see public spectacles, or use perfumes, or love to touch money, or delight in what they eat, but to mix something unpleasant with it.* They report further concerning the Tapolins themselves, that they observe many rules of strictness, besides those by which their scholars and the laity are obliged; that they frequent their pagods; look not on women, speak not to them; live on alms, but go not into the houses; expose themselves to the open heavens several nights in February, in the midst of the fields; keep a solemn fast of three months, preach every day of that season; recite a kind of chapelet; preach sometimes from morning to night (each in his turn for six hours together) without wearying the hearers.† They cast a ring into the sea, and it is calm (if we have faith to believe it). They have places to which great numbers of pilgrims travel upon the score of devotion. They have images which they carry abroad for the procuring of good weather. They have, they say, a relic of their god Sommonokhodom, who has ascended to heaven—a portion of his hair.”‡ So that if mere monastic sanctity be a note of a true religious society, you may find out by it such a society at Siam.

Last of all, there are many things in the Roman church itself, which, by helping forward an ill life, do, in part, deface this mark of her sanctity: such as charming consecrations, indulgences, dispensations, and other abuses of the seal of the church; doctrines about masses, attrition, purgatory, and papal supremacy; which last is very prejudicial to the quiet of the world, especially in the *deposing* point, concerning which, I take leave to use the words of another, with relation to Bellarmine. “He was himself a preacher for the league in Paris,§ during the rebellion there of King Henry IV. Some of his principles are these following:—‘In the kingdoms of men, the power of the king is from the people, because the people make the king.’ Observing that he says ‘in the kingdoms of men’ there is no doubt but he restrains this principle to the subordination of the pope; for his holiness in that

* Voyage de Siam, lib. vi. p. 418.

† Ib. p. 418—420, 422.

‡ Ib. p. 412, 413, 415, 416.

§ Postscript to Transl. of Maimb. Hist. of the League, pp. 15—17.

rebellion, as you have heard, was declared 'Protector of the League.' So that the pope first excommunicates, (which is the outlawry of the church); and, by virtue of this excommunication, the people are left to their own natural liberty, and may, without further process from Rome, depose him. Accordingly you see it practised in the same instance. Pope Sixtus first thunder-struck King Henry III. and the King of Navarre; then the Sorbon make decrees that they have successively forfeited the crown, the parliament verifies these decrees, and the pope is petitioned to confirm the sense of the nation, that is, of the rebels. But I have related this too favourably for Bellarmine; for we hear him in another place positively affirming it as 'matter of faith, if any christian prince shall depart from the catholic religion, and shall withdraw others from it, he immediately forfeits all power and dignity, even before the pope has pronounced sentence on him; and his subjects, in case they have power to do it, may, and ought to cast out such an 'heretic,' from his sovereignty over Christians."

If, therefore, the faith of Bellarmine be *faction*, whatsoever his church is in itself, it is certain, as he has made it, it can never be found out, either as *the* church, or as *a* sound church, so far as we are to look for it by the note of holiness.

THE
ELEVENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;

VIZ.

THE GLORY OF MIRACLES.*

BY DR. RESBURY.

HAD not the Cardinal either thought, by the mere number of his notes, to have given the greater show to the argument, or written in pure compliance to the humour and interests of the age wherein he lived, he would hardly have insisted upon this of miracles, especially in the method wherein he hath managed it. For by instancing from the very first age of the church, to the fifteenth, nay, to the sixteenth age, (wherein himself undertook the defence of it) he hath interested himself in all the ridiculous stories, the fanatic legends, which the monkish fabulous ages have delivered, the mere recital of which, since he hath espoused them, might be a sufficient exposure of his argument. And, indeed, had the Cardinal's authors but used the same grave care and fidelity, which that great historian, though a gentile, professed in his writing the Peloponnesian war, he had lost the greatest part of this note, and we been excused the pains of examining it. For that historian tells us,† “He could multiply fables as others have

* “Undecima nota est gloria miraculorum.” BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 14.

† Thucyd. lib. i. p. 16. A. B. C. Καὶ ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν ἴσως τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες ἀτερπέστερον φανέϊται. Ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτε αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, τοιούτων καὶ παμπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἀρκούντως ἔξει.

done, and they might perhaps be more divertive to an injudicious reader ; but his regard should be to what is true and certain, which all that have a mind to the certainty of things should judge much more profitable."

However, proceed we to the examination of this note, as the Cardinal hath thought fit to propose it in proof of his church.

As to this he premiseth this two-fold foundation :

I. "That miracles are necessary to evince any new faith, or extraordinary mission."

II. "That miracles are efficacious and sufficient." By the former, he tells us, it may be deduced "that the church is not to be found amongst us protestants : by the latter, that it is most assuredly amongst them."

1. As to the necessity of miracles, he quotes Moses, *Exod. iv.* *St. Matthew, chap. x.* and *St. John, chap. xv.* He further proves it, "by a similitude of one necessarily showing his orders received from his diocesan, by which he is authorized to preach ; and by a quotation from *St. Augustin*, and the concession of *Melancthon*, one of the reformed persuasion ;" all which was needless, and the similitude too weak and inconclusive.

2. As to the efficacy and sufficiency of miracles, he proves this, "partly as they are the seals and testimonials used by God, without whose immediate power they could not be performed, and who will by no means bear witness to a lie : and, therefore, where either Turks or Pagans, Jews, heretics, or false prophets, have pretended to any extraordinary feats or accomplishments of this kind, either they have appeared the mere tricks and delusions of the devil, or else, in the attempts they have made, they have been publicly disgraced and disappointed ; so the prophets of *Baal*, *Simon Magus*, several of the *Donatists*, *Luther*, and *Calvin*." In the application of the whole of this for the proof of his church, and the utter extirpation of ours from all title to the denomination and benefits of a church, he gives a summary of miracles in every distinct age, by which the church of Rome, and no other, (for that is the whole drift of his argument) hath been all along signalized as the true catholic church. In the first age, he mentions the miracles of the holy Jesus, and his apostles. In the second, those of the christian soldiers under *Antonius*, the

Emperor. In the third, those of Gregory Thaumaturgus. In the fourth, those of Anthony, Hilarion, and others. In the fifth, several mentioned by St. Augustin, as done in his time. In the sixth, some wonders done by popes, viz. John and Agapetus. In the seventh, miracles wrought in England, by Augustin the Monk, and his company. In the eighth, St. Cuthbert and St. John, in England. In the ninth, those of Tharasius; and great numbers by Sebastian the martyr. In the tenth, St. Rumbold, St. Dunstan, and a certain king of Poland, with others. In the eleventh, St. Edward, St. Anselm, and (to make up the number) honest Hildebrand, or Pope Gregory VII. In the twelfth, St. Malachy and St. Bernard. In the thirteenth, St. Francis and Bonaventure, St. Dominic, and others. In the fourteenth, St. Bernardinus, and Catharine of Sienna. In the fifteenth, Vincentius, St. Anthonine, and others. And lastly, in the Cardinal's own age, Franciscus de Paula, and the holy Xaviere, among the Indians.

Thus having laid down the main scheme of the Cardinal's managing this note, which he calls the Glory of Miracles, I shall show the weakness of that proof, as it concerns the Church of Rome, distinct and exclusive to that of the Reformed; and that under these three heads:—

I. That *mere* miracles, *without any other considerations* at all, are not a sufficient note of any church or religion whatever.

II. Much less are those miracles which are alleged in the church of Rome, any tolerable proof or confirmation of these particular doctrines or practices wherein we of the reformed church differ from them.

III. And lastly; we of the reformed church, as we do not pretend to the working of miracles in our age, so if we did, we could pretend to prove nothing by them, but what hath been already sufficiently proved by the miracles of Christ and his apostles.

I. That mere miracles, without any other considerations at all, are not a sufficient note of any church or religion whatever. I add this passage “without any other considerations at all,” because those miracles which are recorded and embraced by all the faithful, as part of the undeniable proof of Christianity, are attended with

all the circumstances that are requisite to strengthen and enforce them ; whereas, those miracles which the church of Rome pretends to, in confirmation of some doctrines in which we differ from them, are attended with none of the requisite considerations to enforce them : *i. e.* they are produced merely to confirm some particular doctrines, which doctrines have no antecedent advantage of being plainly and expressly laid down in the holy Scriptures, nor the miracles themselves of being foretold by any prophecy.

As for those miracles that in primitive days were wrought to confirm Christianity in general, it was the infinite goodness of Providence to make them of that nature, and to order the performance of them in that way, that there is no room left for the honest considering mind to reject them, either as to matter of fact, to mistrust that they were ever done, or as to their force and efficacy, to suspect that they do not most fully confirm what they were produced for.

1. As to matter of fact : they were done so publicly, and in the view of those that were the greatest enemies ; and after they were done, they were reported partly so soon, in an age when there were so many then alive that could have contradicted the report if not well grounded ; and partly with so much hazard, that as the very reporting of them exposed the performers to the rage of the enemy to the uttermost, so the falsehood of them, if it had appeared, would have brought upon them the scorn of those that had been kindest inclined. The miracles that are more peculiarly appropriated to the church of Rome, are never pretended to be done but amongst those of that communion, and never for the conviction of any one gainsayer, no one of the reformed religion having ever once been an eye-witness to any of them.* They come handed to us from a dark and fabulous age, reported of persons, who themselves hint no such thing of themselves in any of their own writings, but rather the contrary, as may be seen more afterward : and the stories they have framed gave them no hazard, (excepting loss of reputation with all wise men,) for it was in a time when the monks' plenty, and ease, and freedom from all dangers, gave them a luxuriancy of thought and fancy, and the invention itself a title to the favour of great men, and perhaps to

* *Vid.* Pref. to the School of the Eucharist.

the same kind of honour to be done for themselves after death. So St. Bernard had the fame of miracles affixed to him by those that came after him, as he had done to St. Malachy in the same age with himself. So also St. Anthonine tells his stories of St. Vincentius, and Surius his of him. But then,

2. Besides matter of fact, in which as to the certainty of the thing and the reasons of credibility there is so great a difference, so also is there a difference in the force and efficacy of the one and of the other, to confirm what they are produced for. There is a most unquestionable force in the argument taken from those miracles that were for the first proof of Christianity, but not so in the other, as we shall see anon. There are these circumstances that highly recommend the primitive miracles :

(1.) That those were generally very beneficial to human nature, doing mighty offices of kindness towards those whom they were wrought upon; such as, healing the sick, raising the dead, restoring the deaf, the lame, and the blind, &c. ; all which bore an excellent proportion to the great design of redeeming and saving mankind. And if at any time there were any mixture of severity in the very act, such as striking some dead by a word, or putting others into the immediate possession of the devil by the act of excommunication; yet even this was done either in kindness to posterity, by fixing, in the first institution of things, one or two standing *pillars of salt*, that might be for example and admonition to after ages, against some practices that might otherwise in time destroy Christianity, as in the first instance, of Ananias and Sapphira against the sin of hypocrisy; or else, to some good purposes for the persons themselves, as in the last instance, of excommunication: so in the case of the incestuous person it was adjudged by St. Paul, “to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,” 1 Cor. v. 5. None of these miracles were such useless, ludicrous actions as the Romish authors have filled their histories with; such as that of St. Berinus, who, “being in full sail for France, and half his voyage over, finding he had forgot something, walks out upon the sea, and returns back dry shod.” Such again as St. Francis, bespeaking the ass in the kind compellation of brother, “to stand quiet till he had

done preaching, and not disturb the solemnity." Such as St. Mochua, by his prayer and staff hindering the poor lambs from sucking their dams, when they were running toward them with full appetite. And St. Fintanus keeping off the calf from the cow, that they could neither of them move toward one another. Such, in a word, as St. Finnianus and St. Ruadanus sporting their miracles with each other, as if they had the power given them for no other end but mere trial of skill, or some pretty diversion to bystanders.*

(2.) As those primitive miracles were generally very beneficial to human nature, so the design of them was of the greatest importance and significancy imaginable; and both this design and the miracles that should confirm it, are plainly laid down beforehand in the prophecies of the Old Testament. The design was, to bring in and establish entirely an excellent religion, a perfectly new dispensation of things; nay, further, to abolish a former model and constitution of things, that had been formerly brought in and established by the very same argument of miracles. It was not to establish any one particular doctrine, that might be either in supplement to, or direct contradiction of what had been hitherto delivered; but to settle one perfect and entire standard, that should be the rule and measure of all that we were to believe and practise to the world's end.

It is true, the Jewish dispensation, as it was fixed and modelled wholly at the appointment of God, by the hands of his mediator Moses, so was it also enforced by such visible powers from above as abundantly authorized the institution, and gave it that confirmation (so long as it was framed and designed to continue) that there should be no kind of miracle pretended, which should not *then* have its trial by this standard; and if any thing should be wrought with design to draw any off from their present establishment, the *sign* or *wonder* should for that reason be rejected, and the pretender to it, though he had made himself signal in performing it, immediately condemned, (Deut. xiii.) But then, as things were at that time settled for a period of time only, and the change of the whole scene was determined on the appearing of the promised Messiah; so the change, and the *person* that

* *Vid.* Colgan. in Vit. Mochuæ et Finniani.

should effect it, with all the mighty works he should perform, and the vast success of these miracles accordingly, were all pointed out beforehand by express prophecies, uttered under this very Mosaic dispensation: "The Lord thy God will raise unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken," Deut. xviii. 15. To this prophecy St. Stephen appeals in the defence he makes for himself, Acts vii. 37. And this is the whole indication our Saviour thinks fit to give John the Baptist, that He himself was the person that "should come," (Matt. xi. 5,) viz. "The blind receive their sight, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead are raised up, and to the poor the gospel is preached," as had been prophesied before.

Now if the Cardinal could have shown either that a new dispensation of things was to be introduced, after what had been established by Christ and his apostles, or that what was to be introduced should be also afresh confirmed by some new endowments of power from above, and that accordingly the church of Rome upon just warrant had introduced, and by her miracles had authorized, this great revolution; this indeed would have been a reasonable proposal to our faith. But as there is no hint of this in the holy Scriptures, nor prediction of miracles to confirm it; so if any such things be now pretended, they are no warrant to us to embrace it. There is, I confess, a considerable *change* foretold, and there is also a prophecy as to those wonders that should be wrought for the justifying of this change; but then this change hath no other denomination than that of *apostasy*, or falling away, and the *wonders* by which it must be justified are to be no other than *lying wonders*, with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in them that perish, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. And as to this change and these wonders, if those of the Roman communion think fit to claim them to themselves, we shall not contend with them about it. Here, therefore, is the just foundation upon which those divine miracles, that were wrought for confirmation of Christianity, do rest, viz. that the design of them was to bring in entirely a new dispensation of things, and that this new dispensation of things had been predetermined by God, and the miracles that were to confirm it, when brought in, had their testimonials beforehand by

prophecy. And this testimony St. Peter builds upon, as having something in it of greater certainty than the miracles themselves, 2 Pet. i. 16, 19. The miracles he mentions, when he tells them, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty : for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son,' &c." "And this voice we heard when we were with him in the mount : " but then the apostle adds, "We have a *more sure* word of prophecy," &c.

And this is what I have propounded to show, namely, that mere miracles, without any other considerations at all, are not a sufficient note or proof of any church or religion whatever. The word *miracles* I take in the comprehensive sense, to mean all those *signs* or *wonders*, any prodigious effects that appear to us out of the course, and order, and power of nature, which no one can ordinarily do himself, or assign any reason in nature for being done : such things may certainly be done, and yet may be no proof of the truth and divinity of that doctrine they would advance. It is not questionable but there may be some miracles wrought, wherein the finger of God is so plainly discernible, that it would render those that reject them inexcusable. Such as those that once extorted that confession from the magicians in Egypt (Exod. viii. 19), and such as our Saviour did so avow (Luke xi. 20), that from thence he charges the Jews with the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, as may be observed by comparing Luke xi. 15—20, with Matt. xii. 24—32. But then, there have been considerable signs shown, and wonders done, of which no reason in nature can be given, and yet make no proof of their *own* divinity, and consequently not of *that* they were advanced for ; such were those which Jannes and Jambres, when they withstood Moses, performed in Pharaoh's view : these they of the church of Rome with one consent do acknowledge to have been the mere delusions of the devil. Otherwise, if the mere doing of such great things should be a just proof of their being sent from God, what shall we think of the feats of Apollonius Tyaneus, as they are reported by Philostratus, if but the most, or some part of what he, in a full history of eight books tells us, were true ;

such as, “that he made a tree speak to him;” that he “put to flight an hobgoblin, which in the shape of a beautiful virgin made love to him;” that he foretold many things; and particularly, that “while he himself was in Ephesus, he declared the death of the Emperor Domitian, at that instant when they were actually committing it at Rome;” with abundance more of that nature, which it were too tedious to recite. Indeed, it is not improbable but that Philostratus was a right sophister in the modern sense; and as very a wag at invention for his Apollonius, as any monk in Christendom hath been for any of his saints. Photius’s censure of him is, that the whole story is fabulous; and having instanced in that passage of Apollonius filling some vessels with water, and others with wind, by which he could by turns water the earth after a long drought, and blow the showers off, and dry the earth again, he concludes, “such like things as these, full of delirancy, and many other things hath he prodigiously feigned of him, that the whole study of a vain labour throughout all his eight books is lost, and to no purpose.”* The same kind of esteem for this author does Eusebius profess in his answer to Hierocles, who in his two books, which he entituled Λόγους Φιλαλήθεις, “Truth-loving Narratives,” had set up Apollonius in competition with the holy Jesus. He questions the veracity of Philostratus in many things, though he was willing to allow Apollonius the reputation of a person of “considerable wisdom.”† However, let the truth of the matter be what it will, it is reasonable enough to set these wonders of Apollonius at least against those miracles which the church of Rome boasts of, distinct from those which confirmed our common religion, because the authorities seem equal, and the motives of credibility much of the same kind.

Again; what should we think of those prodigies at Delphos, as they are reported by Pausanias in Phocic.—that when Brennus and the Gauls came against it, and the people miserably affrighted had recourse to the oracle, the god there “bade them not fear;

* Παραπλήσια τούτοις ἀνοίας μεστὰ καὶ ἕτερα πλείστα τερατευσάμενος, ἐν δὲ λόγοις ἢ πᾶσα αὐτῷ τῆς ματαιοπονίας σπουδὴ κατηνάλωται.—Phot. Cens. in Mir. Philostr. Paris Edit.

† Εγὼ δὲ σοφὸν τινα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα τὸν Τυανέα γεγονένα ἡγούμην, καὶ ἐπὶ γε αὐτῆς ἔχεσθαι διανοίας ἐκὼν εἶναι βουλοίμην, &c. — Euseb. contra Hierocl. versus initium.

he assured them he would defend his own :” accordingly there brake out “ earthquakes, and thunders, and lightnings, and apparitions of several of their heroes formerly dead, all the day long : and in the night, unwonted and insufferable rigours of cold, mighty stones, and tops of the rock torn from Parnassus, and thrown so furiously against the barbarians, that not only one or two, but some hundreds of men, either as they stood upon the guard, or were sleeping together, were slain by them ; and by these means was the whole army defeated, dissipated, and destroyed” ?

And thus indeed, the fathers all along do not suppose but that very great things may be done by heathens, or heretics, which yet can be no proof that either of them are in the right. Origen, in his first book against Celsus, takes notice of the objection Celsus makes about the conjurers in Egypt, “ that they could put demons to flight, could blow off diseases with their breath, could call up the spirits of heroes, could dress up the appearance of tables furnished with all manner of delicacies,” &c. ; which things, as to matter of fact, he does not seem to deny the truth of, but to invalidate the force of them from a consideration of the persons that wrought them, as being men of no *good lives*. And again, in his second book against Celsus, he instances in this comparison of miracles, and gives this note to discern those that are divine, from the juggle of impostors, or cheats of the devil, viz. “ to observe the lives and manners of those that perform them, and also the effects when performed ; that is, whether they bring hurt or damage to persons, or whether they correct their manners,” &c.

St. Cyprian,* discoursing of some that had broken off from the church, and yet supposing it possible for them to signalize themselves by miracles, quoting that passage of St. John, “ They went out from us, but were not of us,” 1 Ep. ii. tells us, “ That though the doing such miracles is a high and admirable thing, yet if they take not heed to go in the just and right way, it gives

† “ Nam et prophetare, et dæmonia excludere, et virtutes magnas in terris facere, sublimis utique et admirabilis res est, non tamen regnum cœleste consequitur quisquis in his omnibus invenitur, nisi recti et justi itineris observatione gradiatur.”—*Cypr. de Unitat. Eccles*

them no title to the kingdom of heaven :” where it is observable, that the “*recti et justi itineris observatio*,” is not to be understood merely of a good and virtuous life ; for it is acknowledged on all hands, that some persons inwardly wicked, but outwardly holding communion with the true church, might work miracles, as probably Judas did amongst the other disciples ; but St. Cyprian means it of those that had turned out of the right way, and through schism had broken off from the true church, as the tenor of that discourse shows.

Irenæus tells us of the prodigious errors of Marcus the heretic, and yet tells two of the wonders he did ; viz. “ When he was consecrating, or giving thanks over the cup mixed with wine, drawing out his invocations to a mighty length, he made the cup appear of a purple or red colour ; and that it should seem that that grace that comes from the place which is above all things, did by the power of his invocation distil its own blood into the cup, that those that were present should vehemently desire to taste of the same draught ; that so that very grace boasted of by this magician, might actually flow into them too.”* He gives further instances in a magic trick he had of filling a greater cup with a much less, and to the view of others, inspiring some of the seduced women with the gift of prophesying, and the like. This passage of Irenæus is quoted verbatim by Epiphanius, who also calls this Marcus, τῆς Μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον, one perfectly skilled in the magic art.†

St. Augustin‡ directs thus : “ Let no man vend fables amongst you. Pontius wrought a miracle ; and Donatus prayed, and God answered him from heaven. First, either these are deceived themselves, or else they deceive others. However, suppose he could remove mountains, yet, saith the apostle, ‘ If I have not charity, I am nothing.’ || Let us see whether he hath not charity :

* Ποτήρια οἶνφ κεκραμένα προσποιούμενος εὐχαριστεῖν, καὶ ἐπὶ πλείοι ἐκτείνων τὸν λόγον τῆς ἐπικλήσεως πορφύρεα καὶ ἐρυθρὰ ἀναφαίνεσθαι ποιεῖ, ὡς δοκεῖν τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὑπὲρ τὰ ὅλα χάριν τὸ αἷμα τὸ ἐαυτῆς στάζειν ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ διὰ τῆς ἐπικλήσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὑπερμέρεσθαι τοὺς παρόντας ἐξ ἐκείνου γεύσασθαι τοῦ πόματος, ἵνα καὶ εἰς αὐτοὺς ἐπομβρήσῃ ἡ διὰ τοῦ Μάγου τούτου κληϊζομένη χάρις.—Iren. advers. Hæres. lib. i. cap. 9.

† Epiphanius in Hæres. 34. Marcossii.

‡ August. Exposit. in Evang. Johan. Tractat. 13. versus finem.

I should have believed it if he had not divided the unity of the church, for God hath warned me against such wonder-mongers,* if I may so call them: 'In the latter days there shall arise false prophets, doing signs and wonders,' &c. Mark xiii. Ergo cautos nos fecit sponsus, quia miraculis decipi non debemus; Therefore hath our Lord warned us, because we should not be deceived by miracles." And so he goes on with that which we find in Decret. par. 2, Caus. 1, Quæst. 1, cap. 56: "Teneamus ergo unitatem, fratres mei: præter unitatem, et qui facit miracula, nihil est. Let us hold fast the unity; out of this unity, even he that works miracles is nothing. Peter the apostle raised the dead. Simon Magus did many things; there were many Christians that could do none of these things, neither what Peter nor what Simon did: but what did those rejoice in? That their names were written in heaven."

This father hath many other passages of this kind, in his book *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, "Of the Unity of the Church," but they are already so largely quoted in that excellent preface before "The School of the Eucharist," lately translated into English, that I refer the reader thither, not only for that, but also for the whole argument about miracles, which might justly have superseded this discourse upon the note of Miracles, had it been so ordered in its due place: so that miracles merely, we see in the judgment of the fathers, were never accounted a full and adequate note of any true church: which, in truth, the Cardinal himself, after the great foundation he seemed to have laid as to the sufficiency of miracles, does in some measure yield, when he tells us in this very same chapter, "That the church is demonstrated by miracles, not as to the evidence and certainty of the thing, but only as to the evidence and certainty of credibility:"† which is as much as to say, that miracles may be a note of the church, and they may not be so; that is, such a kind of note by which we may give a good guess at the true church, but cannot be certain. For as one of their own writers expresseth it, "*Miracula Deo et Diabolo, Christo et*

* "*Istos mirabiliarios.*"

† "*Ex miraculis demonstratur Ecclesia, non quoad evidentiam vel certitudinem rei, sed quoad evidentiam et certitudinem credibilitatis.*"—BELLAR. lib. iv. cap. 14.

Antichristo sunt communia;”* “Miracles are common to God and the devil, to Christ and antichrist.”

II. If miracles in *general* are no sufficient note or proof of any church whatever, much less are those miracles alleged in the church of Rome, in confirmation of those *particular* doctrines and practices wherein we of the reformed church differ from them; much less, I say, are those any just note of their church, or evidence of the truth of those doctrines. There are a variety of miracles offered to us in their histories, or in their legends, in confirmation of the several doctrines of sacramental confession, adoration of images and relics, invocation of saints, purgatory, the bodily presence in the eucharist, and the holiness of particular persons that have flourished in their church. Now as to this, we are to consider these things:—

First, That we do not observe any ground throughout the whole Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament, to expect any miracle for the confirmation of any *particular* doctrine whatever.

Secondly, That many of those doctrines which these miracles are alleged in confirmation of, are so far from being expressly asserted or warranted in the holy Scriptures, that they rather bear a direct contrariety.

Thirdly, That there is no tolerable ground for certainty, as to the truth of most of those miracles, which the Romanists do make the glory of their church.

First, That we do not observe any ground throughout the whole Scriptures, either of the Old or New Testament, to expect any miracle for the confirmation of any particular doctrine whatever: the miracles under the Mosaic dispensation were to confirm and establish *that*; and the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles (as I have already intimated) were to bring in and establish the new law of faith. We read nothing throughout the whole Jewish state, that may make us suppose that any of the prophets, after the death of Moses (though they were sometimes endued with the power of doing this or that miracle) ever taught any new doctrine which had not been delivered by Moses, or which they undertook to confirm by any miracle. It is true

* Espencæus in 2. ad Tim.

they sometimes wrought a miracle, as a credential for themselves and their own character, to show that they were prophets sent from God ; but then, the whole errand of their commission was to explain Moses's law ; to awaken men to a stricter conformity to what they had so provokingly violated ; to denounce heavy judgments upon their disobedience ; to speak encouraging things to a distressed and persecuted church ; and, in a word, to foretel the events of future ages, and particularly point out the days of the Messiah, and revolutions of Christianity. Again, we find that under the dispensation of the gospel the miracles which our Saviour and his apostles wrought, were to warrant the *whole* new economy ; and though only one of many things, which the apostles were empowered for, was to bear testimony to the *resurrection* of their Master, yet *this* was the *chief* thing, as the whole frame of the gospel depended wholly upon the truth and evidence of this great event ; because if it were not as fully made out that he rose again, as that he died, their preaching had been vain, and their attempts to abolish the law and constitution of Moses had been an unwarrantable usurpation.

Nor do we find that though in a following age or two the church was probably blessed with those miraculous powers, till the gospel was diffusively enough propagated ; yet do we not find that they wrought any one miracle for the establishment of any one particular doctrine, much less any doctrine that had not been delivered by the apostles before them, nor entered into the substance and fundamentals of the gospel : which leads to the next thing, viz. :

Secondly, That many of those doctrines, which these miracles are alleged in confirmation of, are so far from being expressly asserted or warranted in the holy Scriptures, that they rather bear a direct contrariety : *e. g.* The doctrine of transubstantiation, upon which is superstructed the adoration of the host ; which adoration (supposing the doctrine of transubstantiation not to be fundamentally true) is, by the confession of several of their own authors, downright idolatry. Again, the doctrine of worshipping images we cannot but think to be against the express law of God. The doctrine of praying to saints departed, seems immediately to *entrench* upon the office of the holy Jesus, (as he is our only

mediator,) and gives to the creature incommunicable attributes of the Creator, such as omniscience and omnipresence. And, to name no more, the doctrine of purgatory, with its appendent doctrines about indulgences, satisfaction, and the like, seems to alter the whole scheme of the gospel institution, by taking off from the infiniteness of divine mercy, and the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction.

Now these are the doctrines wherein the glory of the Roman miracles hath been generally concerned. So long therefore as we think we have so much in the holy Scriptures in bar against the doctrines themselves, we cannot but think we have most just objections against the miracles, by which the truth of these doctrines are advanced or supported. We are directed by the apostle "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good," 1 Thess. v. 21; and, "not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God," 1 John iv. 1. By the spirits, doubtless, must be meant no other than those that pretended to prophesying, to revelations, and to the power of some miracles. Now it is very true that in that first age wherein this apostle wrote, among the diversity of gifts, there was this of "discerning of spirits," that adorned some men, 1 Cor. xii. 10. It is not probable that the apostle cautioned *these* against false spirits, for they were empowered to discern them; but the warning belongs to the whole rank of Christians, as appears by the plain rule he gives to try them by, (ver. 2,) "Hereby know ye the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God," &c. This seems to point at a sort of *Gnostics* in that age, that would be allegorizing the whole history of our Saviour's life, and death, and resurrection, and make it no real thing, but purely mystical and figurative: whoever therefore would pretend to the gift of prophecy or miracles, and yet deliver this kind of divinity, must be rejected, notwithstanding all the show he might make. So in proportion still are we warranted "to try the spirits," to judge of any powers of miracle that are produced in confirmation of a doctrine that may entrench upon the great offices of the blessed Jesus, or look new and foreign to those revelations which himself and his apostles have delivered to us as the sum and upshot of Christianity. "Though we,

(saith the apostle,) or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. i. 8; *i. e.* though we, the apostles that are vested with so visible a power of miracles, nay, though an angel from heaven (and certainly if an angel should come, he might be capable of doing things beyond the order or course of nature, to us at least, as hath been often seen by what devils have performed;) though such an one should be propagating other doctrines, and that by all the most powerful methods that such spiritual beings are capable of using, they are to be held accursed.

Our Saviour gives the caution to all his followers in every age, "That there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before." Matt. xxiv. 24, 25. I shall only add the great criterion of miracles in the Old Testament, (Deut. xiii. 1—3;) "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them;' thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." So long, therefore, as the doctrines which these sort of miracles are brought to confirm are in dispute betwixt us,—and after all the impartial inquiry we can make, we think that several of them do war directly against the received doctrines of our faith,—this glory of miracles is vainly urged to us as a note of the true church, when we are warned even against miracles themselves, where they are pleaded to establish such doctrines. All this, upon supposal that all these pretended miracles were actually true. But then,

Thirdly, There is no tolerable ground of certainty, as to matter of fact, of most of those miracles, which the Romansts do make the glory of their church. The first instance of any miracle wrought by the relics of a martyr, is that story of the bones of Babybas. That martyr having been interred in Daphne,

a suburb of Antioch, when Julian the apostate came to consult Apollo's oracle in that place, near an hundred years after this martyr's interment, he could procure no answer. Upon this, the oracle was conjured at least to give a reason of this silence; accordingly it answered, "Because the bones of Babylas lay so near his temple." I do not find this story called much into question by the gravest authors, nor indeed can we much wonder that the devil should for once give so open a deference to the remains of a holy man, when by one such act he hath so effectually improved his interests and kingdom to so great an advance of superstition afterward, in all those fond devotions that have been since paid to the relics of pretended saints, and all those gross fables of innumerable miracles acted at their shrines, which probably have been coined upon this first occasion of Babylas.

There is another story, almost of as ancient a date, and that is of St. Ambrose having by vision revealed to him where the bones of Gervasius and Protasius the martyrs lay, which he took up, and after considerable miracles wrought, such as curing a blind butcher, &c. he reposed the venerable relics under the altar of a new church, which he built and dedicated. I am not willing to question this either, as to the truth of it, because I find it not rejected by the best writers, as well as told by St. Ambrose himself, and the reason of some miracles of that time might be in vindication of the catholic faith against the pestilence of Arianism, that raged so fiercely at that time. Yet there are some circumstances that render it suspicious; as, why that holy man should think of not building or dedicating a new church, unless he could be furnished with some relics. There seems a pretty good tang of superstition in the very thought; and then, as to the bulk of those bodies when they were found, they seem those of a gigantic race, few of which, I presume, were ever of a constitution for martyrdom. "*Invenimus miræ magnitudinis viros duos, ut prisca ætas ferebat*;"* We found two men of wonderful bulk, such as olden times were wont to produce." Certainly the age of Decius, wherein they suffered, did not produce men of a much larger size than the age of Gratian and Valentinian. But still let this story, as to matter of fact, be

* Ambr. Epist. ad Marcel. Soror, lib. vii.

received as true; doubtless it hath been followed in later ages, with thousands of the like kind, that have been so prodigiously ridiculous and improbable, that several of the considering writers in the church of Rome have been ashamed of them—have professed their disdain at them, and left their censure upon them as plainly false and impossible. Petrus Abbas Cluniacensis had the sense and honesty, even in the twelfth age, to complain of these tales: “*Nosti quantum me pigeant falsa in ecclesia Dei cantica,*” * &c. “You know how irksome these false hymns in the church of God must needs be to me.” And a little after, in the same epistle, adds, “*Mendacia ad minus 24, canticum id citato percurrens animo, reperi,*” “I found at least four and twenty lies in a hasty inspection of that one hymn of Benedict.” Lindanus, one of their own writers, cites a bishop of Lyons, saying, that he had corrected the Antiphonary, “*Amputatis quæ superflua, levia, falsa, blasphema, phantastica, multa videbantur;*” “Having cut off many things which seemed superfluous, trivial, false, blasphemous, and fantastical:” and then adds this of his own, that if that bishop had lived to see the missals in his days, “*Deum immortalem! quo ea nomine pingeret!*” † “Good God, by what name would he have described them!” ‡ Ludovicus Vives, another of their own authors, speaks of their golden legend, “*Quam indigna divis et hominibus sanctorum historia,*” &c. § “How unworthy either of saints or men is that history, which I know not why they should call the golden legend, when it was writ by a man of an iron forehead and leaden understanding.” We are told also by Melchior Canus, § “That he cannot deny, but that even our best writers, especially in describing the miracles of the saints, have gathered up scattered rumours, and transferred them to posterity in their writings, herein too much indulging themselves, or the ordinary sort of believers, whom they supposed not only ready to believe, but also vehemently desirous of such miracles.” And of the legends, he declares,

* Petrus Abbas Cluniacensis. lib. v. epist. 89.

† Lindan. de interpretandis Scripturis, lib. iii. cap. 3.

‡ Lud. Viv. in fine lib. ii. de Corrupt. Art.

§ “*Quanquam negare non possumus viros aliquando gravissimos,*” &c. Melch. Can. Loc. Theol. lib. xi. cap. 9.

“he could not to this day meet with one story that he could allow.” This was the opinion and esteem the wiser authors in the church of Rome have left behind them of such stories as these; however, father Cressy, in his Church History, in this very age of ours, and in a nation where there seems no inclination to such unreasonable credulity, hath thought fit to lick up the spittle of the idlest monks, and to avow the absurdest of all their fictions.

The Centuriators have taken pains for several centuries, both to reckon up the doctrines which the church of Rome hath brought in, and also in every age to affix the particular miracles that are pretended to justify those doctrines. It might create an infinite nausea in the reader, should I follow that method, or indeed examine those persons and their miracles, whom the Cardinal hath ranged in order from the seventh to the sixteenth age.

However, 1. As to the persons whom he makes so famous for miracles, I shall examine one or two, to give you a taste of the uncertainty of all the rest.

And, 2. As to the doctrines; because the Cardinal hath instanced in some, particularly in confirmation of Christ’s bodily presence in the eucharist, I shall examine one or two of them too.

1. As to the persons. In the twelfth age, the Cardinal* brings in St. Bernard, who, as he tells us, “was the father of the monks, and most devoutly addicted to the see of Rome; that he was famous for more miracles than any of the saints whose lives are at present extant;” whereas, if we consult St. Bernard himself, he is comforting himself and others, under the defect of miracles in his age. He tells us, “That miracles are not so properly meritorious, as they are the indications of good men.”† “Who,” saith he, “now casteth out devils, speaketh with strange tongues, destroys serpents,” &c.; nay, seems to account the

* BELLAR. *de Notis Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 14. “Romanis pontificibus addictissimus, pluribus miraculis claruit quam ullus sanctorum, quorum vitæ scriptæ extant.”

† Bernard. *Serm.* 1. In die Ascensionis. “Non tam merita sunt, quam indicia meritorum.—Quis Dæmonia ejicit, linguis novis loquitur, serpentes tollit, &c. Primum enim opus fidei, per dilectionem operantis, cordis compunctio est, in qua sine dubio ejiciuntur dæmonia, cum eradicantur e corde peccata,” &c.—Bern. *ubi supra.*

great work wrought upon the hearts of believers, wherein he and others were made the blessed instruments, to be equivalent to miracles. "The first work," saith he, "of that faith which worketh by love, is the compunction of the heart, by which, without doubt, devils are cast out, when sin is rooted out of the heart. And then, those that believe in Christ, speak with new tongues too; when the old things are vanished from their lips, they do not speak for the future with the old tongue of their first parents, who declined into words of wickedness. So when by compunction of heart and confession of the mouth, former sins are blotted out, they must necessarily destroy serpents, that is, extinguish the venomous suggestions," &c. And thus he goes on in that allusive way, accommodating the whole christian life to something of those miraculous acts in the primitive days. But let the ingenuous reader judge now; is it not probable, that had St. Bernard been so very illustrious for miracles, "beyond all the saints, whose lives had been ever written," instead of apologizing for the defect of miracles, or drawing the equivalent between the conversion of a sinner, and casting out devils, or speaking with tongues, he would not have put in a word or two here, of what great things God had enabled *him* to do?

Again; it is observable of St. John Damascen, concerning whom they tell us, that his hand having been cut off by the Saracens, for the profession of the faith, he praying before the image of the blessed Virgin, and falling asleep, upon his awaking found his hand restored, only a seam of blood visible were it was cut off and joined again. Now, if we consult himself, he tells us of the doctors and pastors of the church, that succeeded the apostles in their grace and dignity, that *they* having obtained the enlightening grace of God's Spirit, did, both by the power of miracles, and eloquence of speech, enlighten blind men, and reduce the wanderer into the way, "*ἡμεῖς δὲ μηδὲ τῶν θαυμάτων*," &c. But we (saith he) who have *neither the gift of miracles*, nor of speech," &c.* Is this spoken like a man of miracle? His commentator indeed would bring him off, as if it were his modesty to speak thus of himself, and gives the instance of St. Paul, confessing himself least of all the apostles: but certainly were he ever so

* Damascen. Orthodox. Fid. lib. i. cap. 3.

modest, he would not tell a lie by any means, especially when he made mention of the miracles that former ages had produced.* St. Paul, as humbly as he thought and spoke of himself, made no scruple, upon occasion, to mention the mighty powers that God had endued him with, and so did St. Peter too: nor was it any other than their duty sometimes to do it, both to own the gift with thankfulness, and to make use of it as an argument to enforce their doctrines upon those they had to deal with. Thus much for the persons.

2. For the doctrines. It would be too tedious to run through the various heads of doctrine, which they boast of as confirmed by miracles, many of which are so monstrously ridiculous, so highly improbable, so confessedly fabulous, so perfectly needless and to no purpose, that they are not worth one minute's regard either to examine or expose them. The Legends of the Saints, and the School of the Eucharist, lately published in English,—I may add, Father Cressy's Church History,—will abundantly furnish the reader, that is at leisure, to dip into this way of learning. However, because our Cardinal hath thought fit to make this of miracles his last argument for the proof of Christ's bodily presence in the holy sacrament; and, besides pointing at great numbers, hath himself insisted upon six or seven which he thought of the greatest weight; † I shall examine one or two of them.

A very considerable miracle the Cardinal mentions from Paulus Diaconus, in the Life of St. Gregory. It is of a woman that laughed while in the distribution of the sacramental bread; she heard it called the body of our Lord, “when she knew she had made it with her own hands. Upon this, St. Gregory prayed, and the outward species of bread was turned into visible flesh, by which the woman was recovered to the true faith, and the whole assembly mightily confirmed.” ‡

This would be a good significant proof of transubstantiation indeed, if it were but true. Though here also a man might as justly question his senses at the sight of such a change, as he

* “Cum modestia et viro Christiano digna humilitate de seipso loquitur B. Pater Damascenus,” &c.

† V. Bellar. de Sacr. Euchar. lib. iii. cap. 8.

‡ Consensus Veterum, p. 69.

must always renounce them in the belief of the thing itself. But there are considerable difficulties, before the truth of the story will go down with *us* unbelievers,

For, 1. It is a very unlucky thing, that any such miracle was never yet wrought in view of any of those churches, that do professedly deny this doctrine. In the second council of Nice, Actio 7, Therasius the president puts this grave question, "What is the cause that miracles are not wrought by any of our images?" and as gravely answers it himself, "Because miracles are not given to them that believe, but to them that believe not." It is indeed what St. Paul intimates concerning the gift of tongues, which most interpreters apply to all other miracles.* *We* are the persons to whom this ocular demonstration should be made; and because it hath not yet upon any occasion or challenge whatever been made amongst us, we may reasonably question the truth of this, or any other story of this kind, which they tell amongst themselves.

Besides, 2. This story was writ by Paulus Diaconus about two hundred years after the death of this Gregory, and in an age as fabulous as any that hath yet been.

I add lastly, That the very doctrine of transubstantiation had hardly got the least footstep in the church, in the days of St. Gregory; it cannot be picked out of any of his writings, no, not in that passage which Mr. Selater hath quoted from him, and which, I presume, is the best that his friend Bellarmine could direct him to, and which hath nothing further in it than a pretty high flight, which several of the fathers would take when they mention the holy sacrament, and what may be well enough defended by those that reject transubstantiation to the uttermost.†

The Cardinal gives us another miracle from Paschasius, de Corpore Dom. c. 14, which our late learned reasoner is very fond of too.‡ "The story is of a certain godly priest, that was in great distress to see with his bodily eyes the shape of him, whom he certainly believed actually present under the species of bread and wine. At length he obtained what he so long desired, and beheld the body of Christ in human shape, but in the figure of a child, which he had also most vehemently desired."

* 1 Cor. xiv. 22. † Consensus Veterum, p. 69. ‡ Ibid. p. 97.

Now as to this, beside the authority of the book out of which this is taken, let us consider to what purpose this miracle was wrought, or the story of it told in this place. The Cardinal is upon the proof of Christ's *bodily presence* in the sacrament, and this bodily presence is so received by those of the Roman communion, that they believe *that very* body, which was slain upon the cross—was buried—was raised again, and went up into heaven,—that that very numerical body is present, substantially and entirely, under the show of bread and wine, the substance of which is perfectly vanished. Let me, therefore, ask Mr. Sclater, of Putney, because his friend the Cardinal cannot now answer for himself, Did our blessed Saviour die an infant, and rise again an infant; and does he now sit at the right hand of God in the figure of a child, or in his infant state? If not (and I hope he will say it is blasphemous to think so) how then did this godly presbyter see the body of Christ, as he supposed it, transubstantiated under the species of bread and wine? The substance of the bread and wine was gone into that body that had been crucified. What! was there transubstantiation upon transubstantiation, and the proper body of our Saviour gone into the substance of a child's body? It may be, this made him in love with those Liturgies he quotes,* wherein "the priest is blessing God for vouchsafing by him to change the immaculate body of Christ and his precious blood," &c. To change it into what? Perhaps from that of a grown man, to that of a child or infant. Well, but the Cardinal is something more wary in the story than the venturesome gentleman of Putney; for he tells us, "the priest desired to see him in this shape." If so, and if he was thus far indulged, what kind of argument is this for transubstantiation? What conviction is this, that the very self-same body that hung upon the cross, and is at the right hand of God, is brought down under the appearance of bread and wine? But the author adds in Bellarmine, that "it pleased God to work miracles upon a twofold account; sometimes to confirm the doubting, and sometimes for the consolation of those that fervently love him."† This we are to suppose then was not to confirm the godly priest in his faith—

* Consensus Veterum, p. 28.

† Bellarm. de Sacr. Euchar. *ubi supra*.

he needed not that,—but to give him great consolation. But what? Are we to suppose that so godly a presbyter as this was to be more ravished in the view of his Saviour under the shape of a smiling, playing babe, than in that very form wherein he finished the great work of our salvation upon the cross, and wherein he is now triumphing above, in the accomplishment of what he undertook? Let *him* believe it that can make the doctrine of transubstantiation the reason of his conversion from the church of England to that of Rome, and can strengthen his faith in it more firmly from some rabbinical prophecies, and such a story as this is.*

I would have examined a third story of St. Anthony of Padua, but I find this done so learnedly and so effectually to my hands by a most ingenuous man,† that I would rather refer the reader to him, than needlessly swell the bulk of this note. Considering, therefore, how little likelihood of truth there is in many stories of this kind,—though (as to matter of fact) *some* of them may have been *possibly* true, yet how reasonably they may be accounted the tricks and impostures of evil spirits,—I cannot but close this head with an expression of St. Augustine to the Donatists, upon the same pretensions they had to miracles, “Removentor ista vel figmenta mendacium hominum, vel portenta fallacium spirituum;”‡ “Away with these, either fictions of lying men, or illusions of deceiving spirits;” for certainly they are neither the note, nor can be the glory of *any true* church. And, therefore,

III. Lastly, We of the reformed religion, as we do not pretend to the working of miracles in our age, so if we did, we could pretend to prove nothing by them but what hath been already sufficiently proved by the miracles of Christ and his apostles.

We most humbly and thankfully adore the great condescensions of divine grace, that hath been pleased in his first planting of Christianity, so fully and so unquestionably to confirm all the necessary articles of our belief, with such strong and convincing miracles. The report of these miracles we most firmly believe: we do, without the least hesitancy, own the Almighty power of God in them, and entirely embrace *all* that faith which they

* Consensus Veterum, pp. 21, 22, and so on, and p. 97.

† Reflections on the Roman Devotions, pp. 326, 327, &c.

‡ August. de Unitate Ecclesiæ, c. 16.

were designed to confirm and establish. We know of no other doctrines that we have any obligation to receive, than what are delivered to us in the holy Scriptures, and so effectually sealed to us. We have nothing *new* to put off or back with the pretence of miracles, but are always ready to reject both the new *doctrines* when they are proposed, and the new *miracles* when they are offered in defence of them. We have no need “to follow cunningly devised fables,” since we have “a more sure word of prophecy, to which, (by God’s grace), we will take heed.” And, therefore, all miracles at this time are superfluous to us: for if the doctrine be not proposed to us beforehand in the written word, ten thousand miracles could not warrant it; if it be to be found *there*, they may save the trouble of a miracle, because that word of God hath been sufficiently confirmed in that way already. This word of God is the sure rule of our faith, the great charter of our hopes; and if the hearty belief of this, and humble conformity of life to it, will not secure us at last, we are contented to lose all the rewards which this gospel hath made us to expect.

And, therefore, since matters stand thus with us, the Cardinal showed himself either a very perverse disputer, or drops asleep when he makes Luther in vain attempting to restore a drowned man to life; or when he tells of a much more stupid story of Calvin out of Bolsec.* “He represents him as hiring a poor man to feign himself dead, that so he might have the reputation of an holy and glorious prophet of God. The poor man takes the hire, feigns himself dead. Calvin comes to him, prays over him, and then takes him by the hand, commands him once and again, in the face of a great assembly, in the name of God to rise; but the poor wretch was beyond the reach of his voice, for he was dead indeed, and all this pageantry of his, by the severe judgment of God, turned into sad earnest.” This he tells us, and much more at length, with most particular circumstances; and yet, in the very next paragraph but one after this story,† the Cardinal quotes

* Bellarm. de Notis Eccles. lib. iv. c. 14.

† Bellar. *ubi supra*. “Respondet Calvinus in Præfat. Institut. et alii, Nos injuriam eis facere, quod ab eis miracula exigimus, cum ipsi doctrinam antiquam, et innumeris miraculis ab apostolis et martyribus confirmatam prædicent.”

Calvin and others of the reformation, pleading in defence of themselves, "That their adversaries do not deal fairly with them, to call for miracles from them, when they publish no other than the *ancient doctrine*, confirmed by innumerable miracles of old by the apostles and martyrs." What! do they openly declare that they neither pretend to miracles, nor need them in confirmation of that doctrine which they preach, because so ancient and well confirmed already, by innumerable miracles, wrought by apostles and martyrs themselves; and yet shall it be fathered upon them, that they betake themselves to such little arts of hiring poor wretches to dissemble their death, that they may have the vain-glory of raising them? Either the Cardinal should not have told this tale, or he should not have reported the answer which Calvin and others have offered in defence of themselves.

To conclude: We are so assured of the whole sum of our faith, *i. e.* that it is what our blessed Lord and his apostles have delivered to us, and we so firmly believe the truth of those miracles which they wrought to support and justify it, that we esteem it perfectly needless and superfluous to pretend to them now. Nay, let me add, that we cannot but think that our very contempt of those miracles which the late fabulous ages have vended in the world, confirms us more effectually in the belief of those which the first publishers of the gospel wrought; because it seems the great artifice of that *father of lies*, when he saw he could not at first either defeat the power of those miracles by imitating them himself, or suppress the notice and conveyance of them to the world, that he would by an after-game, in a more lazy and stupid age, advance some wonders of his own framing, some of them very absurd and ridiculous, all of them very remarkable for their superstition, and so bring the thinking and considering man to suspect, that if those miracles have the same foundation, and were carried on with the same designs, as those by which Christ and his apostles confirmed Christianity, then they may be all equally subject to dispute and question. And it is well for those countries where these miracles are most boasted of, and seemingly believed, if they do not find a very sensible growth of atheism and irreligion amongst them.

THE
TWELFTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED ;
VIZ.
THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY.*

BY DR. CLAGETT.

By the “light of prophecy” two things may be meant.

1. That divine revelation, whereby a man is enabled to foretell that such or such contingent events will certainly come to pass. In which sense, although those may be said to have the light of prophecy, who are instructed what events another hath foretold, and to whom it doth appear also that God hath communicated the certain knowledge of those events to him ; yet in common speech, the “light of prophecy,” as it signifies the revelation of future events, is usually restricted to the person to whom such revelation was immediately made. For he only is called a prophet, who makes known to others those future events, the knowledge whereof he himself had received, not from any other man, but from God, *i. e.* who himself “spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.”†

2. The testimony that is given, by the fulfilling of prophecies, to some doctrine that was designed to be confirmed by it. And thus the christian religion was demonstrated to be the true religion by the light of prophecy ; since whatever the prophets from the

* “Duodecima Nota est Lumen Propheticum.” BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 15.

† 2 Pet. i. 21.

beginning of the world had foretold concerning Christ, by the fulfilling of which he should be known, was all exactly accomplished in our Lord Jesus, and in the material circumstances of that alteration which he made in the state of religion. And in this sense we find the phrase used in the Scriptures, particularly by St. Peter :* “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts :”—where it is evident, that St. Peter speaks of that testimony which was given to the christian religion, by the accomplishment of prophecies, supposing it to be so clear and strong a testimony, that it would remove all doubts, if any remained, concerning the divine authority of the gospel.

The light of prophecy in the former sense, is the knowledge of future contingencies communicated to the prophets ; the light of prophecy in the latter sense, is that testimony, which by the accomplishment of their predictions is given to others long after, for the confirmation of their faith.

Had the Cardinal clearly distinguished between these two notions, his reader might easily have seen how far the light of prophecy may be said to be a mark, by which to know the true church, viz. so far as to do him and his cause no service.

For in the latter sense it may be admitted to be such a mark, inasmuch as the accomplishment of those prophecies which concerned Christ, showed that Jesus was He, and that his doctrine was of God. But then this light of prophecy comes no other way to be a mark of the true church, than as it is an argument, or if you will call it so, a mark of that doctrine, the profession of which makes the church. So that when we have made the best we can of this note, the church is still to be known by the religion it professeth, though that religion is known to be divine, as by other arguments and testimonies, so also by the accomplishment of prophecies.

And yet even here we must be cautious in laying down the fulfilling of predictions as an argument to prove the truth of Christianity. For there are some prophecies, both in the Old and New Testament, that in part have been, and will in time be fully

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

accomplished by persons whose doctrine we are by no means to follow. For antichrist was foretold as well as Christ; and when he comes and fulfils all that has been said concerning him so long before, the accomplishment of those predictions is a mark, not that we should receive, but that we should reject him and his doctrine. So that it is not barely the fulfilling of prophecies, but of such prophecies only as described the character of that person whom we were bound to hearken to and obey in all things, that is an argument of true doctrine. And in this sense we are not unwilling to admit the light of prophecy to be a mark of the true church, though it be a very improper way of speaking: since the doctrine itself, which is demonstrated to be a divine doctrine, comes to be the proper note of the church; and the light of prophecy is left to be one of those arguments, by which the doctrine is demonstrated to be divine. But this way of giving notes or marks for the church is very uncomfortable to the Cardinal's friends, because it will force them to acknowledge, that it is not the church that makes the religion, but the religion that makes the church.

He, therefore, finding no advantage to his cause by this notion of prophetic light, wholly insists upon the former, and makes the gift of "foretelling things to come" to be one note of the church; and doubts not to show it in his own, and will not allow it to be in any other.

So that these two things must come under examination.

I. Whether it be a note of the church?

II. If it be, whether he has sufficiently proved, that they of the Roman church, and no others, have it.

I. Whether it be a note of the true church?

The Cardinal offers to prove that it is, by three arguments huddled up together, which being distinguished are these.

1. That as Christ promised the gift of miracles, so he also promised the gift of prophecy to the church.

2. That none knows future contingencies but God only.

3. That it is a certain note of false doctrine, if a prophet foretells any thing which does not come to pass,

Let us now see what all this will amount to.

1. Christ promised the gift of prophecy to the church no less than the gift of miracles. To which it might be sufficient to say, that as *miracles*, notwithstanding such a promise, are no note of the church ; so neither is *prophecy* such a note, merely because it was also promised. And there is the same reason for the one as there is for the other, for neither the one nor the other was promised to last always in the church. And we have been told sufficiently, that the notes of the church, according to Bellarmine himself, must be characters that are inseparable from it. Now the place by him produced, is so far from proving that the gift of prophecy should flourish in every age, that there are pregnant intimations in it of the contrary. He refers us to the prediction of Joel,* applied by St. Peter to the church ; and because he refers us to it, thither we will go, and not as he does, take things for granted which ought to be disputed, but bring forth the text, and see what argument it will afford. The apostles, as the chapter shows, “spoke with tongues,” to the amazement of all the strangers that heard them: but the unbelieving Jews mocked, and said they were *drunk*. Upon which, Peter lightly passing by that absurd reproach, told them, that “this was that which was spoken by the prophet Joel ; ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,’ ” &c. And again, “I will pour out in those days my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.” Now though prophecy, in the strict sense, signifies foretelling things to come, yet it is here put for supernatural gifts in general, and particularly for speaking divine things by inspiration, and likewise for speaking new tongues ; which is undeniably evident from hence, that the fact of the apostles speaking of the wonderful things of God in tongues they had never learned, was by St. Peter affirmed to be foretold in this prediction of Joel. So that the Cardinal ought to have been very much afraid to make what was promised in Joel a note of the church ; for by this means he has made it unavoidably necessary for those of his communion, the young men, and the old men, &c. to speak in new tongues by inspiration ; which is in effect to unchurch his own party. And,

* Joel ii. 18. Acts ii. 16.

therefore, I imagine his followers will not follow him in this, nor advance the promise in Joel into a note of the church, but will rather say, that the fulfilling of it in the first age of the church was a testimony to the truth of Christianity; and that the prediction of Joel was accomplished, though the same extraordinary gifts were not continued in every age afterward.

2. He says, that “none knows future contingencies but God only;” which, if it should prove that a church is there where the gift of prophecy is, yet does not prove that there is no church where that gift is not, unless it be an inseparable mark of the church to have all those future events made known to some one or other in it, which God only knows. Our Saviour said, “Of that day and hour (when himself should come to judge the world) no man knoweth but the Father only.” Does it, therefore, follow that God must have revealed it to some one or other in the church? If, because God only knows future contingencies, it follows that the church must know them too by revelation from him; then it follows also that the church must know all things that are to happen hereafter, because it is God only that can communicate such knowledge. If he meant that those who have any degree of such knowledge must necessarily belong to the church, because God only can give it; this is not true, as I shall presently show: nor, if it were, could the gift of foretelling some things be for this reason a note of the church, unless also the want of this gift should be a demonstration against any communion, that it is not a true church, which I am sure can never be proved from the fact that none but God can bestow it.

3. He adds, that in Deut. xviii. it is laid down for “a note of false doctrine, if a prophet foretells any thing, and it does not come to pass.” Now,

First. This argument is very inapplicable, unless as lying prophecy is said to be a note of false doctrine, so false doctrine be also supposed a note of a false church, which is a very dangerous supposition to a church that had rather be tried by any other note than that of the truth of her doctrine; for it seems, if we can clearly prove by any good argument that she professeth false doctrine, it follows without more to do that she is no true church. But,

Secondly, It is not said in the place cited by the Cardinal, that false prophecy is a note of false doctrine ; but that it is a note, or rather an argument, that the prophet had no commission from God to say that such an event should come to pass. Nor does it follow from hence, that the false prophet must needs be a heretic, unless it be *impossible* for a catholic or an orthodox professor to tell a lie, which I think no man will be so hardy as to say.

Thirdly, Much less is it said, that a prophet's foretelling rightly a future contingent event, is a note of true doctrine, which would have been necessary to make true prophecy a note of the true church. Nay, on the other hand, there is express caution given not long before, against being seduced into idolatry by true predictions. " If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods ; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, for the Lord your God proveth you,"* &c.

Which shews how false is the confidence of the Cardinal in pronouncing so peremptorily, that there " have been *no true* predictions amongst heathens and heretics, unless perhaps for a testimony to our faith ;" for this warning plainly supposed that such predictions would be, not to confirm believers in the truth, but to prove their constancy under a temptation to error. They must indeed be *false prophets*, as that name signifies ; *false teachers*, who should endeavour to gain authority to impious doctrines and to idolatrous practices, by appealing to the truth of their own predictions ; but yet they were to be *true* prophets in respect of the *events* which they would foretell. And therefore to pretend that heathens and heretics never foretold any contingency which came to pass, but when Providence designed a farther testimony to confirm us in the faith, is, to speak gently, a wretched mistake ; and there is no more difficulty in this point, than whether we are to believe God or Bellarmine.

But if there had been no true prophecies amongst heathens, besides those which were designed for a testimony to the christian faith, yet even these are a manifest argument that the gift of prophecy is no certain note of the church ; nay, they prove it

* Deut. xiii. 1—3.

more evidently than any other prophecies could do, because those predictions surely have the most unquestionable truth, which were made for a testimony to true doctrine. Of which kind that there had been several amongst the Gentiles, seems very probable from those remains of them which we meet with in Virgil* and Tacitus : not to insist upon that famous acrostic of Sibylla Erythræa in Lactantius and Eusebius,† which it is certain that Cicero had seen ; nor what Justin Martyr‡ and Clemens Alexandrinus say of the Books of Hystaspes ; I shall only note what St. Augustine says of this matter, § viz. that “ Christ was not foretold in Israel only, but in other nations also ;” and that “ predictions concerning Christ may be met with in the books of those who are strangers to Israel,” and “ that it is not incongruous to believe that this mystery was revealed to men of other nations. Which things, (saith he,) may be mentioned as advantages on our side, over and above what is necessary.” Now, will any man say that these predictions did less show a prophetic light amongst the Gentiles, because they were true ? With what conscience, therefore, could Bellarmine shuffle off those famous predictions of Balaam,|| a heathen soothsayer, concerning Christ, (to which he adds those of the Sibyls,) by saying that they were a testimony to our faith ? As if the argument were not so much the stronger, that the gift of true prophecy is not confined within the communion of the church. Surely he could not be ignorant, that the Old Testament itself is called “ the word of prophecy,”¶ and that the main predictions thereof were for a testimony to confirm us in the faith. But by the same reason that he strikes off the true predictions of heathens from being an instance of prophetic light, because forsooth they were for the confirmation of our faith ; he must also set aside the best evidence of prophetic light within the communion of the church, the predictions whereof were not less, but more than any others “ for a testimony to our faith.”

As to the oracles of Apollo, which he does well to reject from being true prophecies, we need not offer them for the disparagement of this note of prophetic light, since they might be deceitful ;

* Eclog. iv. † De Divin. 2. ‡ Apol. 2. Strom. lib. vi.

§ Ep. 49. Qu. 2. De Civitate Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 47.

|| Numb. xxiv. 15, &c.

¶ 2 Pet. i. 19.

and yet the light of prophecy neither be always in the church, nor ever amongst those that are out of it.

But when he tells us, that “Heretics are deceived as often as they would foretell any thing;” and that “this appears from the false prophets in the Old Testament;” it is a pitiful thing that such a man should think it enough to prove a conclusion so general by a particular instance. He refers us to 1 Kings xxii. where we find that Ahab’s prophets spoke by a lying spirit. But does this prove that heretics *never* prophesy truly? There were some false prophets amongst the ten tribes upon their revolt; therefore were there never any true ones? How comes it then to pass, that there were so many of the Lord’s prophets amongst them, that at one time Obadiah had hid an hundred of them? * There were some false prophets amongst the Jews; were all the Jewish prophets therefore deceived when they pretended to foretell any thing? We find that God charged the prophets of Jerusalem, no less than those of Samaria, with imposture; † “with running before they were sent, and prophesying when God had not spoken to them, and with prophesying lies in his name,” and a great deal more to this purpose. Therefore, by the Cardinal’s logic, it appears by the false prophets in the Old Testament, that catholics are deceived as often as they would foretell any thing.

To conclude this matter; since the Cardinal seemed to take a particular delight in proving his notes of the church out of the Old Testament, I shall leave this one argument out of the Old Testament against his present note of prophetic light. To make it a note of the church, it is necessary that there should have been no true prophecy but in the church, which is notoriously false; because Balaam, who was but a heathen diviner, prophesied truly of Christ. It is necessary also, that this gift should always have continued in the church, which is alike false; because there was no prophet amongst the Jews between Malachi and Zachary the father of John the Baptist; that is, for about four hundred years together.

And thus much concerning the first inquiry, whether prophetic light be a note of the church. I come now to the second.

* 1 Kings xviii. 4.

† Jer. xxiii. 14, 21, 25, &c.

II. If it be such a note, whether the Cardinal hath sufficiently proved, that they of the Roman church, and no others, have it.

He pretends to prove, that there have been prophets in the *catholic* church ; which nobody denies. But you must know, that the *catholic* church is a term of art, which these masters, to the abuse of names and words, as well as of things and persons, are resolved shall signify the *Roman* church. Well ; let the Roman church be their catholic church ; with *us* it is but the *Roman*. And now that we understand one another, how does he prove that there have been prophets amongst them ? Why, he produces the prophets of the Old Testament, and those that prophesied for five hundred years after Christ ! Agabus, for instance, who is mentioned in the Acts, chap. xi. &c. Now by this I perceive that it was warily done of the Cardinal, to call his church the *catholic* church ; for if he had produced the prophets of the Old Testament, and Agabus with the prophets of the New, to prove that the *Roman* church has had prophets, it would have looked so simply, that the Cardinal himself could not have borne it. But this is one of their old artifices, that when they would get any credit by the prophets and the Apostles, they call themselves the *catholic* church ; and then, because the prophets and apostles belonged to the catholic church, they must belong to them, and to no Christians of any communion but theirs. But how, I pray, comes it to pass, that we have less interest in the prophets, the apostles, and the primitive Christians, than the Roman church has ; nay, that we have none, and they have all ? One thing I am sure of, that if our doctrines and theirs be severally compared with the writings of those renowned ancients, it will not be hard to say who are their children, they or we ; and that they are *our* predecessors and parents and not *theirs*, in all those points wherein we differ from them. And therefore, since it is in behalf of those particulars for which we have left the church of Rome, that the prophetic light of the Old and New Testament is produced as an argument that the Roman church has had prophets, we have some reason to think that the Cardinal, by producing the prophets of both Testaments in this cause, has given us a terrible weapon against himself, and by their prophetic light discovered, that if the Roman church and ours cannot be parts of the same

church, then we, who have the prophets and apostles with us in the doctrine we maintain, are a true church exclusively of them, and not they of us.

In the next place, we are told of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Anthony, and John the Anchorite, whose predictions are related by St. Basil, Athanasius, and Augustin. Now, Gregory was bishop of Cæsarea, Anthony an Egyptian monk, and John an anchorite in a wilderness of Egypt. But how all this proves that there have been prophets in the Roman church, is never to be made out, otherwise than by supposing the Greek and the Egyptian churches to signify the Roman church, by the same figure that the catholic church and that of Rome are all one.

The express testimonies he brings are concerning St. Benedict, St. Bernard, and St. Francis. St. Benedict told Totila that he should reign nine years, and die the tenth; which, as Gregory saith, happened accordingly. St. Bernard foretold the conversion of four unlikely persons, and which was very wonderful, as Bellarmine affirms, when he was desired to pray for the conversion of a certain nobleman; "Fear not, (says he,) I shall bury him a perfect monk, in this very place of Claravall." Upon which the Cardinal cries out, "How many prophecies are there in this one sentence! For that he should one day be a monk, and persevere therein to the death, and end his days in a holy sort, and that before St. Bernard's death, and this in Claravall, and that he should be buried by St. Bernard's own hands, are six distinct prophecies, and all of them not without God's singular providence fulfilled." As for St. Francis, "He admonished the generals of the Christian army not to fight upon such a day with the Saracens, for God had revealed to him that upon that day they would be beaten." But they, contemning the admonition of blessed Francis, fought, and were overthrown with a miserable slaughter. And many more things of the same kind, the Cardinal assures us, might be added. And if he had none of a better kind than these, he ought to have produced as many more, and at least given us number for weight.

Now, though I could very willingly give him all his three stories, yet I am loth to be thought so silly as to take every thing of this kind for gospel, which we are told by Bonaventure, that

wrote the Life of St. Francis, or by Gofrid, that wrote that part of St. Bernard's Life where the Cardinal finds him a prophet; no, nor by Gregory himself, in the second book of his Dialogues, concerning the Life and Miracles of Benedict the Abbot. The story of the blackbird* that went off with the sign of the cross, and that other of the little black boy, invisible to all till Benedict saw him, that drew away the idle monk from his prayers, with many more such rank fables as these, do plainly show, that pope Gregory had credulity enough to have lived in the age of Gofrid, or in that which next followed, of Bonaventure, who is never to be forgotten for his devotion to the Virgin.

But allowing these stories to be well attested, let us see how the Cardinal proves by them that the church of Rome has the gift of prophecy. Why, he tells us, that these monastics were *addicted* to the pope. Now, how much Benedict was addicted to the pope, is not worth inquiry, since his prophetic gift will do the church of Rome no service, now that she is so vastly altered from what she was in pope Gregory's days, who wrote the abbot's life, as has lately been proved beyond possibility of confutation.† As for St. Bernard, he was certainly very far from being addicted to the pope, who, besides his sharp reproof of Eugenius,‡ told him in plain terms, that "he was not *a lord* of the bishops, but *one* of them." So that if his prophecies too must go for the credit of that communion that agrees most with him in doctrine, we shall get the prophet on our side, by showing that there was good reason to put him into the *Catalogus Testium Veritatis*—catalogue of witnesses of the truth. But for St. Francis, we are very willing to let the church of Rome take him, and his prophecy, and to make the best of it they can. The Cardinal's making use of such stories to support so magnificent a pretence as that of prophetic light in his church, plainly shows, that either he was, or ought at least to be troubled, that he had no better.

He should have remembered the just exceptions he brought against the heathen oracles; and since he appealed to the Old Testament for this his note of the church, he had done well to

* Dial. lib. ii. cap. 2, 4.

† Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers, p. 72.

‡ De Consider. ad Eugen. lib. iii.

consider the vast difference between the predictions of the prophets there on the one side, and those not only of those oracles, but of these his petty modern predictions also on the other; and then certainly he would have been ashamed of these proofs of a gift of prophecy amongst those of his own party which he brings, when he would apply this note to his church.

I grant that the predictions of the holy Scriptures are not all of a size; and though all the prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, yet some of their predictions had incomparably more clear and unquestionable characters of divinity upon them than others had. And those were the predictions designed to give testimony to our faith, of which kind those of the Old Testament made it to be the "word of prophecy." For there we find, that divers matters of fact were foretold many ages, and some of them thousands of years, before the event; that the time when such and such things should happen, is described by the fall of empires, not then begun when the prophet spoke, nor to begin for some hundreds of years after; that such circumstances were at so vast a distance of time foretold, that it was impossible for any created understanding so much as to guess at them, so long before they came to pass; in a word, that the several things which the prophets at sundry times foretold concerning Christ, were realized in Jesus, and conspired in bearing witness to him, the evidence of that testimony being unanswerable, when all things were laid together: for this was the method our Saviour took to confirm his two doubting disciples, "He began at Moses and *all* the prophets, and expounded to them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning himself."*

Not that there were no illustrious predictions before Christ but such as were to be fulfilled in him; for many received their accomplishment before,—such as that of the birth of Josiah, by name,† three hundred years before he was born, and his burning upon the altar at Bethel‡ the priests' bones that had offered incense there; and that of restoring the Jews by Cyrus the Persian,§ though neither he nor the Persian empire was yet in being, no, nor the captivity begun from which he was to release

* Luke xxiv. 27.

† 1 Kings xiii. 2.

‡ 2 Kings xxiii. 16.

§ Isa. xlv. 28. xlv. 4. Ezra i. 1.

them. The fulfilling of such predictions as these was a sort of testimony to the truth of the prophecies concerning Christ, till the time came when the answerableness of the event should above all things show, that they also were divine.

If a man would make the gift of prophecy a note of the church, and then apply it to his own church, one would expect that he should bring forth some such predictions as those of the Scriptures, which are beyond all exception divine, for carrying on his purpose. But instead of that, to bring two or three petty stories, one of which is a prediction of an event that was to happen the same day, is to expose a man's cause to the contempt of a heathen, if he were here, who could out of good authorities produce more notable and realized predictions of soothsayers, augurs, and pagan priests. It is a shame to see what pains the Cardinal took to split St. Bernard's prediction concerning the nobleman's turning monk, into *six* several prophecies, after honest Gofrid could find but *two* there. But certainly, if a heathen were to read this twelfth note of the Cardinal, and there find the gift of prophecy made a mark of the society that is united by true religion, as he would guess the *church* means, he would be apt to think that Christians could produce no better prophecies than these of Bellarmine's collecting, to prove there has been a prophetic light in the church, which, if it were true of the catholic church in all ages, would be no little disparagement to it; and being true of the Roman church, is no less a disparagement to that, if the gift of prophecy be a note: for if the Cardinal had better, why did he not produce them?

I do not by any means deny, that some predictions may be truly divine, which yet are far from having the unquestionable characters of divinity upon them. One man may, by his skill in those affairs, foresee the loss of a battle, which no man but himself comprehends the reason of. Another may boldly and at all adventure foretell it without reason, and pretend a revelation for it. And yet Micaiah, in the case of Ahab, foretold such a thing by divine revelation. But then they are not such predictions as these, that will of themselves serve a man's turn to prove the gift of prophecy to be in his communion. These predictions, in conjunction with others that are unquestionably divine, may be

brought into the argument, but not alone, because it is so very difficult to distinguish them from predictions that are not divine, when they are abstracted from other considerations.

I am also as willing to grant, that since the unquestionably divine predictions of the Old and New Testament, when God poured out the spirit of prophecy upon his servants, there have been now and then, in the church, some sprinklings of it, and that several persons have foretold things by divine revelation, which had no evidence of it comparable to what the great strokes of scripture prophecy have. Such a prediction I would allow that of Benedict to be, which the Cardinal cites, if one had good reason to believe it. And I would not much quarrel with that which Gofrid tells of St. Bernard, though I have no great opinion of it. But for St. Francis, I desire to be wholly excused. Which I do not say, as if there were any danger of granting that there has been something of this lower degree of prophecy among some in the Roman communion: for if prophetic light were a note of the church, it is not the foretelling of a few events that happen not long after the prediction which will amount to it, though there may be more reason, upon the account of the holiness of the person, or some such other consideration, to ascribe it to a divine revelation, than to any other cause. As there are some divine miracles that have the finger of God, while others are hard to be distinguished from delusions and lying wonders; so some divine predictions there are which have the characters of God's omniscience upon them, while others are capable of being resolved into other causes: but he must be at a great loss for church marks, that would mark his church by prophetic light without the former.

As for the latter, I have said once already, and I say it again, that they may, nay, I am apt to think that they have had some such in the Roman communion. But the Cardinal is very unlucky in his instances, as some others of the church are whom I have consulted. I cannot see why such turmoil should be made about the predictions of Philippus Neri, the Florentine, that care must be taken to preserve the attestations of them. When he could not persuade a Jew to pray to Christ for himself,* he

* Vita Phil. Ner. p. 76. Mog.

desired the standers-by to pray for him, promising them that he would be converted ; which came to pass, as we are told, in a few days. Again, when one of his converts* had lent a sum of money to a banker, he made him go and fetch it back before night, though he knew not the man ; and within a few days the banker broke. Sometimes he foretold that such a sick man would die, and sometimes that such an one would recover : which predictions are all paltry ; but no other reason can be given, I think, why Nerius must for such things as these pass for a prophet, but that they cannot write the lives of their saints, without stuffing them, as with miracles, and visions, and ecstasies, so sometimes with prophecies too, and then they must be content with such as can be had. The good writer of *St. Rose's Life*† took great pains to make her a prophetess not long before her death ; for she, forsooth, knew by divine inspiration that a convent of *St. Katharine of Sienna* would be built, and this, ten years before the foundation was laid ; she had it shown sometimes by signs and figures, sometimes in the exact fashion and model, and would talk of it as if she had it before her eyes ; she drew it out upon a paper, and she could tell who would be the first abbess there, knew her by face, and after a sort consecrated her by a kiss, insomuch that some thought she was mad.

It is as hard to believe that the spirit of prophecy should be given to a maid for no other end, as it should seem by this story, but to get her the fame of a prophetess, as that the ludicrous miracles, that do no manner of good, are the marks of divine power.

It may be reasonable to believe that some measure of this gift is imparted, when not only the event answers the prediction, but when the end aimed at is great and good, and of general use, as when God sent prophets to his people to bring them back to the law. I should, therefore, make no difficulty to allow that Hieronymus Savonarola, a very religious friar in Florence, was sometimes enlightened with prophetic knowledge, because he did not only foretell several things that happened, some in his lifetime, some after his death, and others that are yet to come to pass ; but his business was plainly this, to awaken men to repent-

* Vita. Phil. Ner. p. 100.

† S. Rosæ Vita, c. 18.

ance, and to forewarn the great ones themselves of the judgments of God hanging over them, if they would not do their parts to restore good discipline and good manners to the church. Thus, as Philip de Commines tells us,* he assured Charles VIII. that he should be very prosperous in his voyage into Italy, and this that he might reform the corrupt state of the church, which if he should neglect to do, he should return with dishonour, and God would reserve that work for another; and so it happened. He was a man of singular virtue and piety, and obtained the reputation of a prophet, not only with the greatest part of the people,† but with such men as Philip de Commines, who knew him well; and that noble earl Jo. Franciscus Picus, who wrote his life. To which we may add, that he was served as God's prophets sometimes have been—put to death at the instigation of the pope. And for what reason do we think? Because he prophesied against the simony, whoredoms, and profaneness that reigned in the church; for which he was accused of preaching scandalously against the manners of the clergy and court of Rome.‡ In short, he was silenced by pope Alexander VI., and at length, upon the pope's process against him, he with two of his companions were tormented, and all to make him deny that he had received those things from God which he had said; and after horrible tortures, which he endured with great patience, he and they were at once hanged and burned,§ to the everlasting infamy of the pope, and no less to their confusion who will needs have it believed that there have been prophets in the Roman communion.

Savonarola was put to death in the year 1498, a little before the Reformation. It was about 150 years before that, that Joannes de Rupe Scissa, such another man as Savonarola, and a monk, prophesied to the same purpose that he did after him, foretelling several things that happened afterwards in the kingdom of France; but running out into the reproof of the luxury and vices of the pope and the great churchmen, pope Innocent laid hold on him, and kept him in prison, as Froissard acquaints us,|| who relates these things at large. If there were room for it, I believe some more instances of this kind might be added, to show that which

* Chron. du Roy, &c. ch. xxv. p. 338.

† Guicciard. Hist. lib. ii. p. 42.

‡ Lib. iii. p. 94.

§ Vita Savonar.

|| Froissard. Chron. tom. i. 2.

Bellarmino has aimed at, but failed of doing—viz. that they have had in their communion some persons who cannot reasonably be denied to have had the revelation of some future events ; but let the instance of Savonarola be by no means forgotten, for it is the clearest of any that I ever yet met with for that purpose, and, which is something more, his story stands upon better authorities far than that of Gofrid, or that of Bonaventure. And thus having found out prophets for them, let the Cardinal's followers make the best of it.

As for what remains, the Cardinal's proof that Luther had nothing of the gift of prophecy, is very insufficient, allowing Cochleus's story, that Luther said the popes and cardinals, &c. would all vanish, if himself should go on to preach two years longer. It does by no means appear that he spake this with a pretence to the spirit of prophecy, but it is rather evident that he did not, since the belief of his success was grounded upon the supposition of his preaching so much longer. Nor was it very much to be admired, if a man of his fervent spirit, who had in so little time drawn off such multitudes from their dependence upon the Roman see, should promise himself, in so good a cause, that the papacy would in a short time be generally forsaken. The event indeed was not answerable to his assurance ; and this showed that he was mistaken in his opinion, but there was nothing of the false prophet in the case.

Melancthon, who may be believed concerning Luther,* as well as Bonaventure concerning St. Francis, tells us of several things that Luther foretold ; others say the same thing for Melancthon. The prediction of John Huss, that a hundred years after, they that burned him should have to do with a Swan that would find them work, and the event proving accordingly, is known by all. These are things we think fit to observe, but we are of a church that does not put us upon that hard service, as to make a note out of them ; for that church that has the true notes, does not need any false ones.

I

* Vita Lutheri à Melanct.

THE
THIRTEENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ. THE
CONFESSION OF ADVERSARIES.*

BY BISHOP KIDDER.

THE substance of what the Cardinal contends for in this chapter, amounts to no more than this,—that the force of truth is so great, that the enemies of it are constrained to bear witness to it. And whereas Catholics (by which he means the Christians of the Roman communion) neither praise nor approve either the doctrine or life of heathens or heretics, but affirm all those to err who follow not their doctrine, yet Pagans, Jews, Turks, and heretics speak well of Catholics. This he accounts an argument that they are in the right, the confession of enemies being very considerable in this case. And that their enemies do bear this testimony, he attempts to prove by an induction of particulars from the writings of Pagans, Jews, &c. which shall be considered in due place. For the clearing of this whole matter, I shall do these things:

I. Inquire whether this confession of enemies be indeed a note of the church or not.

II. If that should be granted, the next inquiry will be, whether or not the particulars produced by the Cardinal do evince, that

* “Decima-tertia est nota Confessio Adversariorum.”—BELLAR, *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 16.

this note is peculiar to the Roman church, exclusively of other Christians that are not of her communion.

III. I shall examine the question a little further, and more especially the testimony of the Jews.

I. Inquire whether this confession of enemies be indeed a note of the church or not.

If it be no note, the Cardinal might have spared the pains of this chapter; and that it is none, I make no doubt to make appear beyond all exception. And here I appeal to the Cardinal himself; nor shall I need any other argument to prove it, than what I borrow from him. He hath told us (cap. 2.) what things are required to constitute notes of the church; and I am well content in this matter to be guided by him. He tells us, amongst other things, "That true notes are inseparable from the true church." In this we are agreed, and shall easily allow this confession of adversaries to be a true note, if it be inseparable from the true church; but if the true church may be without it, it can be no true note of it: for that can never bring me to the certain knowledge of a thing, which may or may not belong to it, and is so far from being essential to it, that the thing may not only be without it, but must be before this can belong to it, and will continue to be, though this should not be at all. This is plainly the case: the church of Rome must be the true church (as the Cardinal pretends) because Jews, Pagans, and Turks, &c. bear favourable witness to her. But this confession of her adversaries is essential, and an inseparable mark of this church, or it is not. If it be not, it can be no true note; and if it be, then the true church cannot be without it, and we could not have known it to be a true church, if it had not happened that Jews and Pagans, &c. had borne their testimony for her; so that upon the matter, the church is much indebted to her enemies for this note; for had not they chanced to have spoken well of her, this note had been quite lost; and yet it is absurd to suppose she could be without note, which is, according to the Cardinal, something that is inseparable. Certainly the true church must be before she had any enemies, and might have continued a true church, if these enemies had not spoken well of her at all; and therefore it is

very absurd to make this confession of her adversaries an inseparable note that she is a true church, when, if she ever were a true church, she must be so before these adversaries did testify of her.

There was a time, in the infancy of the christian church, when the church was "everywhere spoken against,"* and when the whole christian religion was by its adversaries called *heresy*. The church at that time was no true church, or else this Confession of Adversaries is no inseparable note of it. Either there was no true church in that primitive time, or else this confession of enemies must be discharged from being a note.

But this confession is a note of the Cardinal's making. Jesus Christ, the head of the church, never made it one. So far was he from making this a note of the true church, that he rather makes it a sign of the contrary. "Woe unto you," says he, "when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets," Luke vi. 26. Our Lord calls them *blessed*, (Matt. v. 11, and certainly he speaks not of them that were out of the true church), that are *reviled*, and have "all manner of evil" said against them. He pronounceth them blessed (Luke vi. 22, 23,) who are "reproached," and whose "name is cast out as evil;" he bids them "rejoice in that day, and be exceeding glad." St. Peter reckons the "reproaches for the name of Christ a glory and happiness," 1 Pet. iv. 14. And Simeon foretold of Jesus (Luke ii. 34), that he was set for "a sign which shall be spoken against." And "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," says the great Apostle of the Gentiles, 1 Cor. i. 23.

So far is this "Confession of Adversaries" from being a note of a *true* church, as the Cardinal would make it, that the reproaches and scoffs of enemies are no reflection upon the true church of Christ. The worst of men do not use to treat the best things well; and when these bad men are enemies, they do not prejudice wise men by their invectives and reproaches. Tertulian† concludes the Christian religion good, because Nero, one of

* Acts xxviii. 22, with chap. xxiv. 5, 14.

† "Qui enim scit illum, intelligere potest non nisi aliquid bonum grande à Nerone damnatum."—*Tertul. Apol.* "Nothing but what is eminently good was condemned by Nero."

the worst of men, bent his force against it. The church will want nothing that is required, though Jews and Pagans should with one consent perpetually declaim against her.

In a word, this Confession of Adversaries, of what use soever it may be, can be no note; for it is contingent and arbitrary, and lies at the pleasure of those who are not only out of the church, but enemies to it; and in the infancy of Christianity the church was without this note; and if that be allowed to be a true church, this can be no true note of it.

II. But if it should be granted that this is a true note, the next inquiry will be, whether or not the particulars produced by the Cardinal do evince that this note is peculiar to the Roman church, exclusively of other Christians that are not of her communion?

It is certain, that by the true church (the notes whereof the Cardinal attempts to give us), he means only the church of Rome. And what in the beginning of his book* he calls the "true church," he calls afterwards "our church," and makes them both one and the same: at last it comes to "our catholic church" with him.

So that this note of his, which he calls the Confession of Enemies, must belong peculiarly to the Roman church, or else it will do him no service; for this is a rule which the Cardinal hath laid down, "That notes must be proper, and not common."† For, says he, if I would describe a certain man to one who knows him not, I must not say that he is one who hath two eyes and hands, &c. because these are common things, and he will never find him by such common descriptions as these. According to this account we may justly expect, that when the Cardinal produceth the Confession of Adversaries in behalf of the church, he should produce witnesses who speak of that very church of which he makes this confession a note; else these witnesses prove nothing to his purpose. If they should chance only to speak some favourable words of Christianity, or of some few Christians, this will be short of what they are produced for in this place; and whatever good use may be made of their confession, yet it will not belong peculiarly to the church of Rome. They must speak to the

* V. C. vi. et C. ix. et C. xi.

† C. ii.

church of Rome, and in her behalf, or else the Cardinal had better have spared them.

And here, not to invert that order which the Cardinal hath taken, we will begin with the Pagans, and see what they have to say in behalf of the church of Rome. The Cardinal begins with Pliny the Second : he, in his epistle to the emperor Trajan, gives this testimony in behalf of *Christians*, viz. "That they detested all vices, lived most holily, and were blameable on this account only, that they were too forward to part with their lives for their God ; and they rose up before day to sing praises to Christ." But what is all this to the church of Rome, especially as it is now constituted, and distinguished from other Christians which are not of her communion, and do not own themselves subject to the bishop of that church ? He speaks well of Christians, and we allow that those of the church of Rome at that time were such : we have no quarrel with the Christians of the Roman church who lived in the days of Trajan. Pliny speaks well of them ; but what does he say ? Does he say that they worshipped images, or that they adored the host ? that they prayed to saints, and made use of several intercessors ? that they deserved favour, because they came so near the pagans in these things ? He says no such thing : he tells us "that they lived well, and detested vices ; that they sang praises to Jesus, and were willing to die for God." Did we ever find fault with any of the church of Rome for their good lives, or the hymns of praise which they sing to Christ ? Have we ever quarrelled with them for detesting vices, or exposing their lives for the honour of the true God ? He commends the Christians that *lived then*, but not for any thing of belief or practice, which is *now a matter of controversy* between us and the present church of Rome. Pliny commends the ancient Christians : be it so : why must this be restrained to the church of Rome ? Were there no Christians but what were in communion with, and were subject to the Roman church ? He commends the Christians of that time ; but will this justify those who afterwards shall call themselves by that name ? He commends them for their good lives, their love to God, and gratitude to their Saviour : will this justify the present church of Rome ? will it serve to defend the worship of images, or prayers to the blessed Virgin, and invocation

of saints? Does it appear that there were no Christians in the world but those of the church of Rome, and that that church was then what it is now?

What the Cardinal produces afterwards, hath no greater force than this testimony of Pliny. Tertullian tells us, that the heathens would not hear the cause of Christians whom they knew to be guiltless, but condemned it at all adventures; and that the best emperors favoured Christianity, and that it was persecuted by the worst. All this, however it may serve the common Christianity, does not make for the purpose for which the Cardinal does produce it.

The same may be said as to what he mentions of the efficacy of the prayers of the christian soldiers from the epistle of M. Aurelius; and if St. Anthony, St. Hilary, and St. Martin, were revered by the Pagans, I do not so much as imagine what service this will be to the cause the Cardinal hath undertaken to defend, or what prejudice it will be to ours. So that hitherto nothing is said to the purpose in hand,—nothing said but what the Protestants may as well apply to themselves as the church of Rome.

His next set of witnesses are Jews. If we examine them, we shall only find that he hath wisely made choice of two great names, but that neither of them speaks one word to the purpose: his authors are Josephus the historian, and Philo Judæus, two incomparable authors. Here is the mischief, that neither of them has a syllable that makes for the defence of the church of Rome, or the prejudice of the Reformed. However, let us hear them speak. And first let us hear what Josephus, the elder of the two, hath to say; it is this, “That Jesus was a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; that he was the effector of wondrous works, &c. and that he was the Christ or Messias.” By the way, the Cardinal makes Josephus speak nonsense, as he reports his testimony; for he says, not only that Josephus does affirm *Christ* to be more than a man, but that he was truly the *Messias*. Now Josephus would never speak at this rate: to affirm that Christ is the Messias, is to affirm that Christ is Christ; for the Messias and Christ are the same. Josephus affirms that Jesus lived at that time which he

* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. c. 6.

mentions, and that *Jesus* was the *Christ* or *Messias*. But to let this pass ; I grant that Josephus affirms that Jesus was the Christ ; what is this to the church of Rome any farther than it concerns our common Christianity ? I would fain know why the Cardinal produceth this in behalf of his church ; or what reason can be assigned, why Protestants may not as well apply it to their own. The common Christianity is concerned in such a testimony, and so far the Roman church is also : but set aside that consideration, and take the church of Rome as the Cardinal does, as distinct from, and opposed to other Christians that are not of her communion, and I dare say I will produce testimonies as pertinent as this of Josephus out of any page of Homer's *Iliads*, or the *Commentaries* of Julius Cæsar ; for what coherence is there between these two propositions, "Josephus confesseth that Jesus was the Christ, therefore the church of Rome is the catholic church ?" And yet this is in truth the Cardinal's way of arguing.

Let us hear next what Philo Judæus hath to say in behalf of the Christians of the church of Rome. Now it would be to me a wonderful thing, to find Philo say any thing in behalf of those Christians, when he never once mentions the name of Christian in all his works ; yet the Cardinal hath the confidence to affirm, that Philo hath written a famous book of the praises of those Christians who lived in Egypt under St. Mark the evangelist. After this his positive affirmation that Philo *had* written such a book, as being sensible that Philo *hath* no book that beareth any such title, he adds the testimony of some of the ancients, that Philo meant the Christians, and not any sect of the Jews, as the Centuriators would have. I do not think it worth my while to examine his ancient writers which he quotes for his opinion : I will for once take it for granted that Philo* means the Christians of whom he gives so good a character under the title of *Therapeutæ*.

Let it be so, what is this to the business ? Because those Christians in Egypt were good men, and such as Philo describes them, must, therefore, the church of Rome be the catholic church ?

The next witnesses which the Cardinal produceth are Turks. He tells us that in the *Alcoran* it is said, that Christians are

* Philo Judæus de Vita Contemplativa.

saved, that Christ was the greatest of prophets, and had the soul of God ; and that the sultan of Egypt revered St. Francis, whom he knew to be a Christian and a Catholic. To what purpose all this is produced I do not understand : I am sure it cannot serve that of the church of Rome, as she stands separated from other Christians ; and if it be a testimony in behalf of our common Christianity, then all Christians are concerned in it as well as those of the church of Rome. The Alcoran will do the Cardinal no service, unless he could have produced some testimony peculiar to the Roman church, or that might have justified the worship of images, adoration of the host, the doctrine of transubstantiation, or some of those doctrines and practices peculiar to that church.

The last set of witnesses produced by the Cardinal, he calls heretics. A man would think the case very desperate that needs such witnesses ; but yet I find the church of Rome does not disdain such as these, when they speak of her side ; but in the present question, we shall find they do that church no service. The substance of what the Cardinal allegeth, is what follows, viz. that an Arian king honoured St. Benedict, a catholic ; that Luther, when a heretic, owned that in the papacy were many good things, nay, all that was good, *e.g.* the true Scripture, baptism, &c. ; that Calvin calls Bernard a pious writer, and yet he was a papist ; that another protestant acknowledgeth Bernard, Dominic, and Francis, to be holy men ; to which he adds a passage of Cochläus, who reports an article of agreement, wherein the protestant Helvetians write, that they would dismiss their confederates quiet, assuring them of their true, undoubted, and their *catholic* faith.

From all which, I see not what he can collect for the interest of the church of Rome. We do honour every man that is good in the church of Rome, but this does not infer that we justify all her doctrines ; we own that they have the true Scriptures and sacraments, but this does not justify their addition of apocryphal books to the canon of the Scriptures, nor of more sacraments than were owned to be strictly so in the ancient church. We will allow that there have been pious and holy men of that church, and are not scrupulous in calling them by the name by which they are commonly known and distinguished from others.

Much good may do them with such witnesses as Calvin and Luther, who did to the last bear testimony against the corruptions and innovations of that church.

I might make many remarks upon what the Cardinal affirms, that whereas catholics neither praise nor approve the doctrine or life of heathens or heretics, yet these speak well of them. I do not think the Romanists the more catholic for this, that they speak well of none but of themselves, and will allow salvation to none but those of their own communion. I could name a certain lord of this kingdom, who was upon his death bed urged to declare himself of the church of Rome, from this argument of Bellarmine, viz. that they of the church of Rome denounced damnation to *all* out of her communion; whereas, we protestants allowed salvation as possible to *some* of them. But he answered the priest that urged this, “that he thought it safest to die in the communion of that church that was most charitable.” A man would think that charity, which is an inseparable note of a Christian, and made so by our blessed Saviour, John xiii. 35, might have been allowed to have been a mark of the true church also.

That they do not commend heathens, the Cardinal affirms roundly, and yet it were no hard matter to prove that many catholics have done it, and that they might very well do it. For why may not heathens be commended for their justice, their fortitude, their temperance, gratitude, &c.

He tells us likewise the same of heretics, that the catholics neither commend their life or doctrine. Indeed they have little reason to expect it from those who are resolved to speak well of none but those of their own party and way. And yet, because the Cardinal lays so great a stress upon the confession of adversaries, and condescends to receive the testimony of heretics (as he is pleased to call us) when it makes for his purpose, I shall at least produce, on our own behalf, as many confessions from those he calls catholics, as he hath produced of ours on the behalf of his church, and those also both with respect to our lives and doctrines.

And, though it be true that they of the church of Rome have blackened Luther, and the other first reformers, as men of flagitious lives, yet there will be found among them some who have given a better account of them.

I might give in a very fair account of John Huss and Jerome

of Prague, from a contemporary of their own church, who knew them well, and conversed with them before they died. As for Martin Luther, whatever the Romanists say of him now, yet certain it is, that Erasmus, who I hope will pass with Cardinal Bellarmine for a catholic, who lived in his time, gives a better account of him. In his letter to the Cardinal of York, speaking of Luther, he says, “*Hominis vita magno omnium consensu probatur; jam id non leve præjudicium est, tantam esse morum integritatem, ut nec hostes reperiant, quod calumnientur:*” * “His life is approved by all men, and this is no slight ground of prejudice in his favour, that such was the integrity of his morals, that his enemies could find nothing to reproach him with.” Again, in a letter to Ph. Melancthon: “*Martini Lutheri vitam apud nos nemo non probat;*” † *i.e.* “All men among us,” says he, “approve the life of Martin Luther.” The same Erasmus says of Œcolampadius, ‡ that “he meditated of nothing but of heavenly things.” Maldonat the Jesuit, § an allowed catholic, and fierce enemy to the Calvinists, says of them, that “there appeared nothing in their actions, but alms, temperance, and modesty.”

But their *doctrine* is of greatest concernment in this present question. Let us see if any of our adversaries of the church of Rome have made any confession in favour of our doctrine. And here I will not enlarge; it will be enough to produce a few more testimonies, and those more pertinent than what the Cardinal hath produced on the other side.

The doctrine which our first reformers preached, was not so absurd as it is by some represented: many of the church of Rome have spoken much in favour of our doctrines. Erasmus did so of many of those doctrines which Luther taught: “The things, (says he,) which Luther urgeth, if they were moderately handled, in my opinion, come nearer to the evangelical vigour.” || And speaking of the Eucharist, he adds, “That were he not moved by so great a union of the church, he could embrace the opinion of Œcolampadius.” He adds, “That he found no place in the Holy Scriptures where the apostles are said to have consecrated bread and wine into the flesh and blood of the Lord.” The same

* Erasm. Ep. lib. xi. Ep. 1.

† Ep. lib. v. Ep. 38.

‡ Ep. lib. vii. Ep. 43.

§ Maldonat. in Matt. vii. 15.

|| Epist. lib. xxii. Ep. 10. *ibid.*

Erasmus elsewhere does profess, "That he wished that what Luther writes of the tyranny, covetousness, and filthiness of the court of Rome, had been false."

Cardinal Mattheo Langi, archbishop of Saltzburg,* told every one, that the reformation of the mass was honest, the liberty of meats convenient, and the demand to be discharged of so many commandments of men just; but that a poor monk should reform all, was intolerable. The doctrine was not so obnoxious as to offend the most moderate and considering men of the Roman church; many of them have upon occasion frankly declared on our side.

It hath been proved, that St. Gregory the Great was no friend to private masses or transubstantiation; and it is well known that he renounced the title of universal bishop, which is now claimed by the popes of Rome. A learned writer of our church† hath long ago produced many witnesses of the church of Rome, that have borne testimony to the doctrine of protestants; *e.g.* "The doctrine of purgatory was not for a long time universally believed in the church," says Polydore Virgil. "Some before Luther taught that papal indulgences were but a kind of godly cheat," says Gregory de Valentia. "The worship of images was condemned by almost all the fathers," says the same Polydore Virgil. "The authority of a council is superior to that of the pope," say the councils of Constance and Basil. "Marriage of priests is not prohibited by legal, or evangelical authority, but by ecclesiastical," says Gratian. Venerable Bede owns only two sacraments on which the church is founded. For many other things disputed between us and them, we appeal to the learned and moderate men amongst them, and doubt not to defend our doctrines by the confessions of those of their own church: such are they of the number of sacraments, the primacy of the bishop of Rome, &c.: and we make no doubt but to produce many catholic authors speaking on our side.

For communion in both kinds, we have the testimony of the councils of Constance and Trent, that it was the ancient practice.

For the doctrine of transubstantiation, one of the communion of the church of Rome hath given us an account lately;‡ he proves

* Hist. Coun. Trent. lib. i.

† See Bishop Morton's Appeal, lib. i

‡ See a Treatise of Transubstantiation by one in the communion of the church of Rome, printed 1687.

from many doctrines of the church of Rome, that it is not ancient, viz. from Peter Lombard, from Suarez, Scotus, the bishop of Cambray, Cardinal Cusanus, Erasmus, Alphonsus à Castro, Tonstall, and Cassander: and that it is not taught in the holy Scriptures, he proves from the testimonies of Scotus, Ockam, Gabriel Biel, and Cardinal Cajetan; and after all, that it was not the doctrine of the fathers of the church.

It would have been very fit that I should here have made an end, having considered every thing which the Cardinal hath offered as to this note of the church. But there is a late writer (I will not call him author)* who hath the confidence to produce the testimony of the Jewish writers in behalf of the church of Rome; and, which is most surprising of all, he quotes the Rabbins in defence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which they are as far from asserting, as he is from understanding them. The Cardinal was too learned and modest to attempt any thing of this nature; but this gentleman advanceth higher than he thought fit to do:—what he offers, speaks nothing so loudly as the writer's effrontery and ignorance, not to say something worse.

III. I shall examine the question a little farther about the Jews, and I shall do these things:—

First, I will briefly show the true use and value of the testimony of Jews, as to the Christian religion.

Secondly, I shall show the gross ignorance (not to say dishonesty) of this writer in this matter.

Thirdly, I shall prove that the Jewish writers are so far from serving the church of Rome, that they bear witness against it, and that also in this very matter of transubstantiation.

First, I shall consider how far the testimony of the Jews is useful to Christianity. And several such there are that serve the common Christianity.

1. The Jews, as to matter of fact, confess that there was such a man as Jesus; that he wrought wonderful works. They do, in their Talmud and elsewhere, mention several of those names which are mentioned in the New Testament, and are there mentioned to have been at the same time in which they are placed here. This is an useful testimony, and serves the common Chris-

* Mr. Selater's Consens. Vet.

tianity, and saves us the labour in our books against the Jews, of proving these matters of fact.

2. They are also good witnesses as to the number of canonical books of the Old Testament, which were deposited in their hands. This is owned by Cajetan,* who affirms, that this is one advantage we receive from the obstinacy of the Jews, that though they believe not in Christ themselves, yet they approve the books of the Old Testament, and therefore those books cannot be supposed to have been invented by the Christians, to serve their turn. This testimony of theirs serves indeed the common Christianity, but is so far from serving the church of Rome, that it is a good evidence against the council of Trent, who have received those books for canonical, which the Jews never received into the canon of Scripture.

3. They are good witnesses of the promise of a Messiah, which is reckoned among the fundamental articles of the Jewish faith. And this is another advantage that Christians receive (as Cajetan† well observes in the place mentioned before) from the obstinacy of the Jews. They agree that such a promise was made, and that therefore it cannot be supposed either a forgery of the Christians, or a vain belief peculiar only to them.

4. They are good witnesses where they interpret those texts of the Old Testament of the Messiah, which belong to that matter, and which are by the writers of the New Testament applied to that purpose; and the more ancient Jews do thus. The Chaldee paraphrasts, and other of the more ancient Jewish doctors, do apply those texts to him, which the Christians also understand to be spoken of him; of which, were it not too great a digression, it would be easy to produce very many proofs. This serves the common Christianity greatly, and in our disputes against the Jews, affords us very great advantages.

5. Nor do I deny but that some of the catholic doctrines of the christian religion (I mean such as have been always believed from the first beginning of Christianity) may receive some confirmation from the writings of the most ancient Jewish doctors. But to produce them as witnesses, as this writer does, to a doctrine, like

* Cajetan in Rom. xi. 11.

† Abravenel. C. Fidei, cap. 1.

the Romish, never received by the ancient church, is the most extravagant thing imaginable.

Secondly, I shall show the gross ignorance (not to say dishonesty) of this writer in this matter.

His author, from whom he borrows all his Rabbinical learning, is Galatinus: he tells (if we will believe him) that "he was always accounted a very learned man:"* it would have been more to his purpose to have vouched for his honesty. After this he falls into a fit of devotion; he is of a sudden transported with admiration, that "the Hebrew writers long before Christ's time, (take Mr. Sclater's word for that) should have such notions; but the wind bloweth where it listeth," &c. He might have staid till he had been sure of the matter of fact, and then it would have been time enough to admire it. But the reader is to know, that Mr. Sclater was mightily inclined to believe in this matter with the church of Rome, or else Galatinus could never by his arguments have prevailed upon him. This appears from his own words, (p. 27,) after he had drawn up his evidence from Galatinus; he tells his reader, that "Galatinus thought (and I will assure you it is hard to say what a Jew that professeth himself a convert to the church of Rome does really think) these prophecies and interpretations (he might have called them dreams and figments) argumentative, not only against the Jews, but a confirmation also of the christian religion against all heretics," &c. But if you ask Mr. Sclater what confirms him in his belief, you will find him of easy belief; "I am confirmed, (says he,) by the title-page of his book." Of so great force is the title-page of Galatinus's book with Mr. Sclater, of Putney!

This Galatinus was born a Jew, was afterwards a convert to the church of Rome, and a friar; and pretends to discover something in the Hebrew doctors to justify the doctrines of the Roman church, to which he had betaken himself. It is certain that learned men have represented him as a man of *no sincerity*, and have taken notice of his falsity and the *forgeries* of his book. Johannes Mercerus,† a man of singular learning, and Scaliger,‡ a great judge, give this account of him. And so also many

* Preface to Consens. Veterum.

† J. Mercer. in Job ii. 11.

‡ Scalig. Epist. ad Casaubon.

others, and some of the more learned men of the church of Rome have done. Sixtus Senensis* reprehends him for belying pope Clement V. Joseph de Voisin,† a priest of the church of Rome, taxeth him of ignorance of the doctrine of the Jews. The best character I find of him is, that he was a plagiarist or thief; he stole what is good out of the “*Pugio Fidei*” of Raimundus.‡ For other things in this book, they are figments and forgeries, trifles, and ridiculous things. His testimonies out of Gale Razeiah and Zohar, are of no credit. Jac. Mausacus, and the above-named Joseph de Voisin,§ authors against whom Mr. Sclater cannot except, will give the reader this account of him. In a word, he was a converted Jew, (and what kind of men they have proved, I need not tell, nor can I think of that matter without sorrow); he is one that Cardinal Bellarmine thought not fit to quote in behalf of their church; one that is condemned and stigmatized by the learned men of the church of Rome. But yet this author hath so great force with Mr. Sclater of Putney, that he is confirmed by the very title page of this book.

I should be vain, if after this I should be operose in examining the testimonies produced, and yet I cannot but reflect a little farther upon the stupid ignorance and insincerity of this writer. He quotes R. Solomon|| for the proof of transubstantiation. All that R. Solomon says to his purpose is, that the seventy-second Psalm is wholly meant of the Messiah, and that many of their Rabbins interpret that which we render handful of corn, of certain sweet-meats or dainties in the days of Messiah. It is very well known, that the Jews fondly expect great feasting in the days of the Messiah; and no wonder that many of the Rabbins should interpret these words of those dainties. After all this, R. Solomon gives another interpretation of the place;¶ but what is all this to transubstantiation? But be all that as it will, with what face can he affirm that he produces several Jewish masters, when he produces not one?*** And yet he confidently attempts to name them, though he betray his great ignorance in it.

* Biblioth. St. lib. ii.

† J. Voisin. Theolog. Judæorum, p. 237.

‡ Jac. Maussaci Prolegom. in Pug. Fid.

§ J. de Voisin. Observat. in Procem.

|| R. Sol. in 72. 16

¶ V. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. lib. xxxvi.

** Consens. Vet. p. 21.

He says, he produceth the book Siphre, R. Ira, Midras, Coheleth: where he reckons Midras Coheleth, which is but the title of one book, (viz. a Commentary of Ecclesiastes) for two rabbins. This I dare say is Mr. Sclater's own, he could not borrow it from the "learned" Galatinus. Mr. Sclater adds that he says, that by the tops of the mountains (in that Psalm) nothing can be more rightly designed, than the prelates and priests of the church; "in whom this scripture is then fulfilled and verified, when the body of Christ is elevated." Now there is not one syllable in R. Solomon of Siphre, R. Ira, Midras Coheleth; not a word of the priests and prelates; all this is Mr. Sclater's fiction. Galatinus himself affirms no such thing of R. Solomon;† and, therefore, if by "*he produces*" Mr. Sclater means R. Solomon, as any reader will be apt to think, he wrongs him, for in truth he quotes none of those authors, though Galatinus does.

For this first quotation out of R. Moses Haddurshan, or the Preacher, if we should allow it to be truly cited, yet any indifferent reader will find it not to the purpose; for what follows is too transparent to gain belief: besides that, a learned society of Hebricians were many years ago consulted about a quotation of Galatinus, out of that R. Moses,‡ who gave it under their hands, that they found in the place quoted *nothing to the purpose*.

For this citation out of Mechilta (p. 22), though there be nothing in it to the purpose, yet if there had, he ought to have referred to the page or leaf of that book, if he had done sincerely.

For R. Cahanah (p. 23), who, he says, was born before Christ, we have so little evidence of that, that it does not appear that there was ever any such writer.

And for R. Johai (p. 24), there is no such author found, nor mentioned by any but Galatinus.

And for the fable of Elias (p. 24), being present at the circumcision, it is a Jewish dream, the use he makes of it is ridiculous, and the testimony of R. Judas a mere figment.

For the Gale Razia, cited by him, and what he cites from Rabbenu Hak-kodesh (p. 25), by whom he should mean the compiler of the Jewish Misna, they are mere counterfeits. And Mr.

* Page 21. lib. xxxvii.

† Dr. Morton's Catholic Appeal, p. 394.

Selater is something unlucky, for he in his book, instead of Gale hath Gate, and in his errata he hath it Gaize.

Thirdly, I shall prove that the Jewish writers are so far from serving the church of Rome, by their confession, that they bear witness against it, and that also in the very business of transubstantiation.

And here it were easy to enlarge, and to bring abundant proofs from authors known and easy to be procured, and from such as have the greatest reputation among the Jews.

The ancient Jews are on our side, as to the number of canonical books of the Old Testament. I could easily prove both from Josephus and Philo the Jew,* that they are against that distribution of the precepts of the decalogue which obtains in the church of Rome, and with us do reckon the commandment against images to be a distinct precept, and the second in number.

The doctrine and practice of praying to saints, and worshipping of images, the Jews except against,† the latter of which is against the very letter of their law.

The doctrine of purgatory;‡ the practice among Christians of crossing themselves when it thunders; the christening of bells;§ the doctrine of the necessity of the celibacy of priests; the vowed celibacy of monks and nuns;|| as well as of receiving of apocryphal books into the canon of Scripture, and other opinions and practices in the christian church: all these they condemn.

And for the doctrine of transubstantiation, as it is against the common sense of mankind, and destroys the certainty of every thing else; so the Jews, upon all occasions, object against it. We have a witness beyond exception, even of the Roman church,¶ who brings in the Jews objecting against this doctrine, and representing the unreasonableness and absurdity of it from fourteen several heads of argument, which I must not here represent to the reader, because it would be too great a digression. Nor do I find this learned author (who writes in defence of the Roman

* Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. iii. c. 4. Philo Jud. Decalogo.

† Nizach. Vet. p. 128. R. Isaac, p. 383. Lipman, p. 16.

‡ Lipman's Nizachon, p. 25.

§ Nizach. Vet. pp. 23, 42, 43, 196. || R. Isaac Chizuk. Emuna, p. 345.

¶ Fortalitium Fidei. Ludg. anno 1525.

church, and attempts to answer these objections), alleging that this was the doctrine which was taught by the Hebrew doctors. The Jews have so far abhorred this doctrine, and so far detested Christians upon this very account, that they were wont, when they made use of christian nurses, to force them to throw away their milk for three days together, before they gave suck, when it happened that at Easter these nurses had received what is called the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This Pope Gregory* complains of, and decrees upon it, that Christians should not for the future be servants to the Jews. And Josephus Albo† disputes against this doctrine of transubstantiation very vigorously; and so do many others,‡ in their books against Christians. And many more testimonies might be produced, were not most of their books printed in Italy, where it is not safe for them to be too plain: and learned men do very well know, that the passage in Josephus Albo against this doctrine of the Roman church, hath been expunged in one edition of that author. It is very well known that all the later Jews are against this doctrine, and that Trypho the Jew, and the most ancient writers, have not objected it against Christians, is only an argument that this doctrine was not so old as that time in which they lived. This doctrine the Jews are certain cannot be true, because if they are not certain of the falsity of this, they have no certainty of their own religion, nor can ever be convinced of the truth of ours. The truth is, this is one great occasion of hardening them against Christianity; and we are never like to see them come into the christian church, till this doctrine of transubstantiation, and the worship of images, be removed out of it: but then the practice annexed to the doctrine of transubstantiation, of worshipping a creature, is so dangerous, that even they who own the doctrine, confess, if that be not true, they cannot be excused from idolatry.

God give us a just sense of these things, that we may not hereafter have, besides our own sins, which will be load enough, the obstinacy of the Jews in a great measure to answer for.

* Decret. Gregor. lib. v. Tit. vi. cap. 13. Accepimus autem, &c.

† Jos. Albo Ikkarim. ‡ V. Nizach. Vet. p. 255. Lipman Nizach. p. 11.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

THE TENTH NOTE.

HOLINESS OF LIFE.

	PAGE
Three things shown in this argument—	
I. What holiness is ; holiness is of two kinds : 1st. Holiness of calling and dedication. 2d. Holiness of minds and morals—what is misunderstood by these	245, 246
II. Neither of these can properly be a Note of the true Church ; because the first, as appertaining to the essence and constitution of a Church, belongs to <i>every</i> Church	246, 247
The second is no note, because—	
1. Persons of all nations and conditions, on the profession of the common Christianity, are admitted into the Church	247, 248
2. Because men live sometimes with less and sometimes with more morality	248, 249
3. Because a man must first understand the nature and doctrine of the Christian Church, before he can know what sanctity is, and what that is in the life of every man which he is to take for the holiness of a Christian	249
III. If holiness of life were a Note of the true Church, other Churches possess this as much as the Roman : many Roman ecclesiastics profligate men	250, 251
The morality of many of the Roman Church not to be attributed so much to Popery, as to the principles of common Christianity	250
The immorality of some Protestants proceeds from the men, not from the doctrine.	251
Luther misrepresented	<i>ibid.</i>
Complaints of the corruptions in the Latin Church by Romish writers, 252, 253	
Reflections on Pope Gregory the Great	254
On Pope John XII. and St. Dominic	255
On the mortifications and austerities of the several religious orders . 256, 257	
Many things in the Romish Church itself, by promoting evil life, deface this mark of sanctity	257, 258

THE ELEVENTH NOTE.

THE GLORY OF MIRACLES.

PAGE

Bellarmino grounds this Note on two foundations: 1st. That miracles are necessary to evince <i>any</i> new faith or extraordinary mission.	
2d. That they are efficacious	260
The weakness of his proofs shown under three heads:—	
I. <i>Head.</i> Mere Miracles, without any other consideration, are not a sufficient note of any Church or religion whatever	261
The Miracles of the primitive Church compared with those that are more peculiarly appropriated to the Church of Rome	262
The several circumstances considered which recommend the primitive Miracles.	
1. They were done publicly in the sight of enemies, and were for the benefit of human nature—two points in which the Romish Miracles are shown to be defective.	263, 264
2. The primitive Miracles were of the greatest importance and significance, and the design of them previously laid down in the prophecies of the Old Testament	264, 265
This applied in opposition to the Romish Miracles.	<i>ibid.</i>
Miracles, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, are no proof of the divinity of the doctrine they would advance, unless other corroborating circumstances attend them.	266
This instanced in the Miracles of Jannes and Jambres, Apollonius Tyaneus, the Delphic and Egyptian Miracles.	266—268
Photius's censure of the Miracles of Apollonius Tyaneus	267
Miracles, whether performed by heathens or heretics, not acknowledged by the fathers that either of them are in the right: this apparent from Origen, Cyprian, Irenæus, and Austin	268—270
II. <i>Head.</i> Miracles of the Church of Rome are no proof or confirmation of those doctrines or practices in which the reformed Church differs from them	271
Three things here considered:—	
1. That there is no ground throughout the whole of Scripture for expecting any Miracle for the confirmation of any <i>particular</i> doctrine whatever: this is evident from the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and from the following ages of the Church.	271, 272
2. Many of those doctrines, for which these Miracles are alleged, are rather contrary than conformable to Scripture, such as transubstantiation, adoration of the host, worship of images, prayers to departed saints, purgatory, &c.	272, 273
Miracles in support of such doctrines justly suspected	273, 274
3. Most of these Romish Miracles uncertain as to matter of fact, 274—276	

	PAGE
The fabulous Miracle of the bones of Babylus, of Gervasius, and Protasius considered	275
The fabulous Miracles of later ages condemned by many Romish writers .	276
St. Bernard and St. John Damascen reflected on.	277, 278
Some pretended Miracles in support of transubstantiation considered, 279—282	
III. <i>Head.</i> Protestants, as they do not pretend to the working of Miracles in modern ages, so, if they did, they could prove nothing by them but what has been already proved by the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles	282—284

THE TWELFTH NOTE.

THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY.

Two things to be understood by the Light of Prophecy:—

1. That divine revelation whereby a man is enabled to foretel that such and such contingent events will come to pass 285
2. The testimony that is given by the fulfilment of prophecies to some doctrine that was intended to be confirmed by it . . . 285, 286

In the latter sense it *may* be admitted as an argument of that doctrine, the profession of which makes the Church. 286

Great caution must be used in laying down the fulfilment of predictions as an argument of the truth of Christianity 286, 287

Two things here examined:—

- I. Whether this be a Note of the Church 287

He attempts to prove that it is by three arguments:—

1. That as Christ promised the gift of Miracles, so he also promised the gift of Prophecy to the church: this argument considered. 287, 288
2. None but God knows future contingencies: this argument considered 289
3. It is a sure sign of false doctrine if a prophet foretels any thing which does not come to pass: this argument considered . . . 289, 290

The foretelling of a future contingent event is no certain note of true doctrine: there have been true prophecies out of the Church, and among heathens 291, 292

The Light of Prophecy was not always continued in the true Church . . . 292

- II. If it be a Note, Bellarmine's proofs that it belongs to his Church exclusively are insufficient: his instances not to his purpose . . . 293—295

The nature of the Prophecies brought to prove the truth of the Gospel considered: the Church of Rome can pretend to few such clear predictions 296—298

	PAGE
The instances of the predictions of Philip Neri, St. Rose, Savonarola, Johannes de Rupe, Scissa, Luther, Melancthon, and Huss, considered	298—301

THE THIRTEENTH NOTE.

THE CONFESSION OF ADVERSARIES.

Three inquiries here made:—

I. <i>Enquiry.</i> Whether this confession be a Note of the Church or not	304
The Church in its infancy had it not: the declaration of adversaries mentioned by our Saviour, the Apostles, Tertullian, and others, rather a sign of the contrary	305, 306
II. <i>Enquiry.</i> If it be a Note, whether it belongs to the Church of Rome exclusively	306
His instances from Pliny and others, apply to the early Christians in general, not to the Romish Church	307, 308
His instances from Josephus, whom he misquotes, applies solely to the character of Christ: his instance from Philo Judæus quite inapplicable	308, 309
His instance of the declaration in the Koran applicable to Christians generally. and his instance of the admissions of heretics insignificant.	310
Want of charity in the Romish Church	311
Favourable testimony borne to the lives of the early Reformers, by Romanists	312
And to the reformed doctrine	312—314
III. <i>Enquiry.</i> Further examination of the testimony of the Jews, and stricture on Mr. Sclater's book.	314—318
The confession and testimony of the Jews clearly against the doctrines of Popery shown	319, 320

THE
FOURTEENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.
THE UNHAPPY END OF
THE CHURCH'S ENEMIES.*

BY BISHOP STRATFORD.

IF he be an unwise builder, who pulls down what he intends to build up, then Cardinal Bellarmine (though one of the master-builders of the church of Rome) deserves not to be reckoned one of the wisest; for he must shut his eyes close who does not plainly see, that the Cardinal frequently defeats his own design, by giving notes which prove that church to be false, which he designed to prove was the *only true one*. Such, for instance, is that, which is now to be considered, as shall in the sequel of this discourse appear.

The confutation of which cannot be difficult, since I find nothing in this whole chapter that hath so much as the show of an argument. Whereas some of his notes are guarded with a pretence, at least, of scripture, reason, and antiquity, this is exposed naked to the assaults of its adversaries, without so much as a paper-shield to protect it. He tells us indeed many tragical stories of "unhappy deaths," some of which are true, some doubt-

* "Decima quarta Nota est, infelix exitus, seu finis eorum qui ecclesiam oppugnant."—BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 17.

ful, and others false : some of persons who were deadly enemies, others of persons who were zealous defenders of the true church : but had the stories been all certainly true, and had the persons who thus died been all of them implacable enemies of the church of Rome ; yet what does it signify, unless he also had proved, that when a person dies an unnatural death, the meaning of it is, that that church, of which he professed himself a member, is false ; and the church he opposed, the only true one ? But how unwise soever he was in the choice of his note, he was so wise as not to attempt the proof of this, unless the citation of this scripture may pass for a proof, “ Praise his people, O ye nations, for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his enemies,” Deut. xxxii. 43. God will avenge the blood of his servants ; therefore, if a protestant die an unhappy death, the church of Rome is the only true church !

But why did the Cardinal send out this note so *forlorn* ? For a good reason : because no defence could be found for it. But why did he then bring it into the field ? Because he knew it was *popular*, and might serve the cause better than another that was ever so well fenced ; for will not he dread to oppose the church of Rome, who is persuaded that God will set *a note of vengeance* upon those that do so ? Will not he steadfastly adhere to it, who believes that that is a certain way to a happy death ? In short, whosoever can be persuaded to believe, that the church of Rome is by this note distinguished from all other churches, he will as much dread to turn protestant, as he does to die the most prodigious sort of death.

But the mischief is, that however serviceable this pretended note may be to Romanists among weak and undiscerning persons, it will do them as much disservice among those who are judicious and able to examine it ; for when they shall once see what a palpable cheat it is, and in case that it were a note of the true church, that the church of Rome hath the least reason of any church in the world to pretend to it, they will be thereby disposed to break off from the communion of that church, which contradicts its own marks, and betake themselves to some other church which hath a better title to them. For effecting which, I shall proceed in this method.

I. I shall premise some things as preparatory to what follows.

II. Show that this can be no note of the true church.

III. That in case it were, the protestant church would be the true church, rather than the church of Rome.

I. I shall premise these five things as preparatory to what follows.

1. That by an "unhappy end," Bellarmine means, that which is so in outward appearance, to the eye of sense, or according to the judgment of the world. Such as a violent, or sudden, or infamous, or any kind of strange or unusual death; especially such in which there is an appearance of the divine vengeance: as to be devoured by dogs, or eaten up by vermin; to be flayed or burnt alive; for a man to kill himself, or to be killed by his servants; to be smitten by a thunderbolt, &c. In a word, any such end, as either in its nature, or in its circumstances, is not the usual or common end of men.

2. Bellarmine meant this, not barely for the note of a church, but of that which is the *only true* church; for since, besides the common faith, in which all Christians agree, there are many points in which they differ, and by which they are divided among themselves into several parties, he supposing that no more than one of these can be a true church, and therefore that *that one* must be the *only true* church, his work was to furnish us with such notes, by which this one church might be known and distinguished from all the rest. And, therefore,

3. The instances he produces of unhappy deaths, are, for the greater part, not pertinent, because the persons were such as were enemies, not to this or that christian church as distinguished from another, but to Christianity itself, and endeavoured the total extirpation of it out of the world. So did the emperors Nero, Domitian, Diocletian, the apostate Julian, &c.: and those heretics, Simon Magus, Manichæus, &c. were not more opposite to the church of Rome, than to any other christian church. There is nothing, therefore, in these instances, by which one christian church may be distinguished from another—nothing by which the church of Rome may be marked out for the true church, rather than the church of Antioch or Alexandria.

And as those direful deaths of the heathen persecutors, and

apostate Christians, gave no peculiar advantage to the church of Rome *then*; so they make much against the church of Rome *now*: for if they signified (as Bellarmine would have them) that church to be the *true* church, which was then opposed by them, it plainly follows, that the church of Rome now is *not a true* church, and that the church of England *is*; because the church of Rome now is not the same church it was then: it hath now another faith, by which it is become another church; whereas the church of England is the same *now* it was at *first*, yea, the same *now* that the church of Rome was *then*; it having purged itself from those corruptions, which have been since introduced by the church of Rome, and reduced itself to the primitive faith. Those other examples of tragical deaths, which, if they had been true, would have been more to the purpose, shall be anon considered.

4. Observe, that the “unhappy end” of those who *defend* it, must be a note of a *false* church, if the unhappy end of those who *oppose* it, be a note of the *true*. The reason is plain; because those who defend the true church, in doing so, must oppose that church that opposes it; if they, therefore, have an unhappy end, the opposite church will have this note of the only true church, and by consequence, that church they defend in opposition to it, must be a false church.

5. Observe, that from God’s judgments against particular persons, nothing can be concluded against that church of which they are members. The reason is manifest, because God’s judgments upon particular persons are usually inflicted for particular personal crimes, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, Ananias and Sapphira. These things being premised, I proceed to show,

II. That this can be no note of the true church; which I might prove at large, by showing that it is destitute of all those conditions which Cardinal Perron,* and Bellarmine himself,† make necessary to every true note. But because this method hath been already observed in the examination of some of the foregoing marks, I shall therefore waive the advantages it would afford me; nor do I stand in need of them, because the vanity and falsity of it will be otherwise sufficiently manifest, both by scripture, experience, and reason.

* Reply to King James, lib. i. cap. 5.

† De Notis Eccles. cap. 2.

First, By Scripture. And,

1. By all those scriptures which declare, "That all things come alike to all men:" that in the common course of providence, there is no difference put between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, between him that *sacrificeth* and him that *sacrificeth not*, Eccles. ix. 1—3. And by a plain parity of reason, he that persecutes the true religion, and he that defends it; he that worships God aright, and he that worships him amiss, or not at all, as to outward events, hath frequently the same lot: as king Josiāh, the restorer and maintainer of the true religion, and who served the Lord with all his heart, died the same unnatural death that Ahab did, who served Baal, and provoked the Lord to anger more than all the kings of Israel that were before him. Nor was this promiscuous dispensation of events taken notice of only by the wise Solomon, but we find it long before affirmed of Job, that "God destroys both the perfect and the wicked," Job ix. 22. Righteous Abel, the first man that ever died, was a proof of it; he, whose sacrifice was by God accepted, fell himself a sacrifice to his wicked brother's envy.

Nor was it thus only before the law, and under the law, but it continues so still now under the gospel. The tares and the wheat, though sown by different hands, the one by the Son of Man, the other by the devil, yet as they grow up together in the same field, so they are gathered and cut down by the same reapers, by the same sickle, and are not severed, the one for the fire, and the other for the barn, till the end of the world.

Yea, in plain contradiction to this note, the Scripture tells us, that "there are just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous," Eccles. viii. 14. And that not only in the course of their lives, but when they die too. For "there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his days in his wickedness," Eccles. vii. 15. The good man is sometimes cut off by an early death, because he is better than others; and the wicked, whose sins cry aloud for vengeance, prolongs his days in his wickedness, and after a long and prosperous life, hath an honourable death and burial; for "I saw (saith Solomon) the

wicked buried," Eccles. viii. 10; that is, as Cardinal Cajetan expounds the words, in such pompous sepulchres, as transmit an honourable memory of them to posterity.

I grant that the notes of divine vengeance, are in some men's deaths fairly legible. But then, as I have before observed, from God's judgments against this or that person, nothing can be concluded against that church of which they are members.

2. Besides these general declarations, the Scripture further assures us, by a particular instance, that a true church may be without this mark, and that the enemies of the true church may have it. Thus the church of Israel was without it, and the uncircumcised Philistines had it, when the high priest fell backward and brake his neck, and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, with thirty thousand of the Israelites, fell in one day by the sword of the Philistines, 1 Sam. iii. Again; when Zedekiah, the defender of the true church, was taken, his nobles slaughtered, his sons slain before his eyes, his eyes then put out, and he carried captive to Babylon and put in prison to the day of his death: if this was then a note of the church, the Babylonians were the only true church of God, for their enemies had then the most unhappy ends: so contrary is this note to what we find in Scripture!

Secondly, Nor is it less repugnant to daily observation, and the history of foregoing ages; for,

1. All the world can testify, that the same kind of death happens to men of different, yea, of opposite churches. That as dies the Christian, so dies the Jew; as dies the catholic, so dies the heretic. That the protestant and the papist "lie down alike in the dust," to use Job's phrase, Job xxi. 26. That as they often agree in their deaths, who, while they lived, were of different churches; so they in their deaths often widely differ, who were united in the same church. One hath a natural, another a violent death; one falls by the hand of God, another by the hand of his neighbour; one goes off gently in a calm, another is hurried away in a storm; one lives out the term of nature, another is cut off in the midst of his days; one dies leisurely, another is snatched away suddenly; one finds a grave in the earth, another in the sea, another finds none at all, but is exposed as a prey to beasts and birds. This is so obvious, that it is needless to produce instances for the confirmation of it.

2. Whosoever has any acquaintance with the history of the christian church, knows, that for several of the first ages at least, the best men had generally the worst deaths: that the apostles of our blessed Lord were set forth as a spectacle to the world—suffered the deaths of the basest malefactors; that St. Peter and St. Andrew were crucified; St. James the Just, stoned, and his brains knocked out with a club; St. Bartholomew, flayed alive: that not one of the apostles can be named, who did not end his life by an unnatural death, except only St. John, who escaped it by a miracle, for he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil.

That the first bishops (their successors) followed them in the like tragical deaths: that St. Clemens, bishop of Rome, was thrown into the bottom of the sea; St. Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, crucified; St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, exposed to the lions; St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, burnt at the stake: yea, that the Christians for the most part, for three hundred years together, met with the most horrid deaths: one was torn in pieces by wild beasts, another was roasted on a spit, another was broiled on a gridiron, another had his flesh scraped off to the bones with sharp shells, and salt and vinegar poured into his green wounds; and for one of their bloody persecutors, an hundred Christians may be found who died a terrible death. These were the “happy ends” that the first and best Christians were blessed with; *happy* indeed, if we respect the *cause* for which they died, and the blessed reward they were crowned with; but none ever more *unhappy* in the eye of the *world*. As they had been of all men the most miserable, had they hope in this life only; so, if this note be true, their hope could not have reached beyond it.

3. Nor is this note more repugnant to Scripture and experience than it is to reason. One prime fundamental principle of reason is,—that contradictions cannot be true; or that the same thing cannot “*be*, and *not be*.” This we are as sure of, as that we ourselves are, or that any thing else is; whatsoever therefore it be from whence it plainly follows, that contradictions may be true, we are sure that it is false; and therefore that the note now under consideration is so, because if it be true, the most palpable contradictions will be true also. Of those many that offer themselves, I shall mention a few. As,

1. That that was a *false* church, which was most certainly the *true* church ; for if the burning alive of Valens the Arian emperor, was a certain sign that the Arian faith is false, the burning alive of many of the first Christians is as certain a note that the primitive faith is false. If it follows that Manichæus was a damnable heretic, because he was flayed alive, must we not conclude that St. Bartholomew was as bad (and by consequence all the holy apostles) because he suffered the same kind of death ?

2. That a church remaining the same, without any change in doctrine, worship, or discipline, may be to-day a false church, to-morrow the only true church. So by this reasoning the church of Israel was a false one, when the high-priest fell backward and brake his neck : within a few days after, when the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines, and they were smitten with a foul disease, of which they miserably died, it was a true church again. Thus the church of Rome, in the year 1656, when a dreadful pestilence (for that is one of Bellarmine's unhappy ends) swept away three thousand in three months' time, in the kingdom of Naples, and made great havoc at Rome and Genoa,* was a false church ; but in the year 1665, when the like dreadful pestilence raged in London, it became a true church again. Yea,

3. That there is no one church in the world, but by this note may be, and may not be, the true church ; because the opposers and defenders of any one and the same church, may have both of them unhappy, and both of them happy ends. Now, as the opposers have unhappy ends, it is a true church ; as the defenders have unhappy ends, it is (by the fourth thing premised) a false one. Again, as the opposers have a happy end, it is a false church ; as the defenders have an happy end, it is a true one. Thus, for example, the church of England is both a true church and a false : Queen Elizabeth lived and died happily ; the Spaniards, her and its greatest enemies in 1588, died unfortunately ; therefore it is the only true church. King Charles I. (of blessed memory) had an unhappy end ; the Usurper died quietly in his bed ; therefore it is a false church. I bring the church of England only for an instance : the same is as true of

* Athanas. Kircheri Scrutin. Physico-Med. Contag. Luis quæ dicitur Pestis. p. 426.

the church of Rome ; and I doubt not, of any other division of Christians of what denomination soever.

And is not this now a fine note to find out the true church by ? when no false church can be found, that will not by it be the only true one ; and on the contrary, no true church can be mentioned, that will not be a false one. Yea, which is more, when that which is indeed the only true church (the church catholic) will by this note be no church ; for not only its enemies, but its friends too, often die unfortunately ; and its enemies, as well as its friends, have frequently such deaths, as in the eye of the world are most happy.

4. Whereas, it is a contradiction to say, that the only true church can be more than one, if this note stand good, it will be many ; so many different churches as there are in the world, so many only true churches will there be, one only excepted. So when a pope dies miserably, (as all the world knows the popes have frequently done) then every church in the world, the Roman only excepted, is the only true church, because the pope is an adversary to every one of them ; and this, (as appeared by the third thing premised,) is made by Bellarmine the note of the only true church ! Yea,

5. Those very protestant churches which Bellarmine designed to mark out for false, will by this note be true churches ; and that which he would conclude the only true church, will be a false one.

(1.) The Lutherans and Calvinists, he says, are not true churches, because Luther and Calvin died miserably. That they so died, I shall presently show is false. But be it true, what follows ? If Luther died miserably, then the Calvinists are the true church ; if Calvin died miserably, then the Lutherans are the true church ; for Luther and Calvin opposed each other, as well as both of them the church of Rome.

(2.) That the church of Rome, which he would make to be the only true church, will by this note be concluded a false one, I shall show in speaking to the next head, and therefore now pass it. I think by this time, not only the vanity, but the falsehood of this note is sufficiently manifest.

III. Let us now suppose it a note of the true church, and see

who will have the best of it. The advantage will lie so clearly on the protestant side, that the Romanists themselves will be forced to confess it.

I grant, that those horrid deaths, which have by the church of Rome been inflicted upon those who have opposed her errors, are a mark by which she is made as visible, as her city seated upon the seven hills; those who have thus died, are more than can be numbered, and their deaths were, many of them, both for nature and circumstances, the most monstrous: but this, I fancy, does not mark her out for the spouse of Christ, but for that “Woman that is drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:” she is not therefore, I think, ambitious of this mark, but would rather hide it, though it is so deeply branded upon her, that she will never be able to rub it out. If, therefore, these be set aside, which I am confident the church of Rome is very willing they should be, and would be glad if all histories were *burnt* too, in which her *burnings* are left on record; let us see which church, the Roman or the Protestant, hath the fairest plea to this note. This will be soon determined, by comparing the deaths of their prime members, and zealous champions, and then considering on which side we find the greater number of such as are unnatural, and not common to men.

1. For the protestants. The chief assertors of the protestant interest, are either their bishops and other eminent pastors and teachers; or those secular princes, who have, under God, been the great defenders and protectors of the protestant faith.

As for their bishops, and other eminent pastors and teachers, they are without number who have died the most happy deaths, such as Jewel, Whitaker, Usher, Hall, Morton, Jackson, Melancthon, Bucer, Musculus, Zanchy, Farellus, Beza, Ursinus, Grynæus, &c., whose deaths were not only placid and pious, but attended with those lively hopes of a blessed immortality, as recommended their religion to its adversaries.

But it is not so much my business to tell you whose deaths were happy, as out of that number to select those that were unhappy. And I think we may take it for granted, that the number of these is very small, since their professed adversary, who laboured to make the most of every thing against them, hath

mentioned no more than five, viz. Luther, Zuinglius, Œcolampadius, Carolostadius, and Calvin. Now suppose it true, that all these died as miserably as Bellarmine would have the world believe; yet what are five to that numberless number, who have had the most auspicious deaths? Will not the argument for the truth of their church from those that died happily, as much exceed that against it from those that died miserably, as the number of the one exceeds that of the other? So that, if the true church be concluded by this argument, it is ten thousand to one but the protestant church is the only true church.

But what shall we say, if the deaths of all but one of these five, be misrepresented? and what he says of that one, and two of the other, if it were true, be no argument of an unhappy death? Whether it be so or not, I shall now briefly examine.

He begins with Luther. "He," says the Cardinal, "died suddenly; for whereas in the evening he was merry and in health, and had provoked all that were present to laughter, by his jests, the same night he was found dead."*

Grant this were true: a sudden death is not always, and to all persons, unhappy; but suppose it were, it ill becomes a papist to object it, since it is no more than what hath been the lot of many of their popes; for so died pope Nicholas III.† and pope Clement VI.‡ as their own writers witness.

But Luther had eaten a lusty supper, and was merry and jocular the evening before; and so had several of their popes the evening before they died. Pope Paul II. after he had supped most jollily, and persuaded himself that he had many years to live, the same night died of an apoplexy.§ Pope Leo X. led

* "Lutherus morte repentina sublatus est; nam cum vesperi opiparam cœnam sumpsisset lætus et sanus, et facetiis suis omnes ad risum provocasset, eadem nocte mortuus est."—*Bellar.*

† "Ubi idem Pontifex cibi ac potus continentissimus, subita tamen morte correptus," &c.—*Plat. in Vit. Nic. III.*

‡ "Vergente hoc eodem anno Clemens, cùm apostolicum solium annos decem, menses septem tenuisset, præcipiti morbo ex humanis ereptus est."—*Raynald. ad ann. 1352. N. 21.*

§ "Et cùm annos plurimos vivere sibi persuaderet, anno salutis nostræ 1471. v. Kal. Augusti hora secunda noctis, cùm eo die lætum consistorium habuisset, et jocundissime cœnasset, apoplexiâ correptus, vitam cum morte mutavit."—*Johan. Stell. anno 1464, p. 262.*

constantly a merry life, but his death happened in the highest excess of feasting, mirth, and jollity, and so suddenly, that there was not time afforded for absolution and extreme unction.* And if Luther jested the day before he died, methinks it might have passed without any severe censure, since Sir Thomas More, the pope's martyr, was so sportful upon the scaffold, and died with a jest in his mouth.

But what credit is to be given to his enemies, we may learn from those monstrous tales they spread concerning his death, not only after, but long before it; such as that horrible miracle wrought at his funeral for the conviction of heretics, which he confuted with his own hand: and it is not unpleasant to read how they contradict one another. One says that he purged out his entrails, like Arius; another, that his mouth was distorted, and his whole right side turned to a duskish colour. But above all, commend me to Thyraeus the Jesuit; he confidently tells us, "That in a town of Brabant, named Cheol, there were many persons possessed with devils, who were brought thither to be cured by the intercessions and prayers of the saint of the place; that these poor creatures were on a sudden delivered from these evil spirits, and that this was the very day that Luther died! That the day after the devils returned again into the same bodies, and being asked whither they were gone the day before, answered, that by the commandment of their prince, they were called forth to attend the soul of their grand prophet and companion Luther!!!" This fable, as ridiculous as it is malicious, is quoted at large, and credited by as considerable a man as Florimond de Raymond.† He, I say, that shall reflect upon these things, will not be apt to believe the reports of his adversaries.

If we take the account of his death from Sleidan, we shall find it very different, and such as was every way becoming a most pious and devout Christian;‡ but it will be said, that he

* "Ex hujus victoriæ nuncio Leonem pontificem ingenti diffusum gaudio referunt, in quo apoplexiâ correptus, nullis perceptis sacramentis, ætatis anno quadragesimo sexto nondum exacto, decessit inopinâ morte."—*Raynald.* ad ann. 1521, N. 108. "Die insequenti lætitiæ pompam sua morte clausit, inopinâ quidem adeo, ut ne sacramentis quidem munitus fuerit."—N. 109.

† De la Naissance de l'Hérésie, lib. iii. c. 11. p. 332.

‡ Jo. Sleid. Comment. lib. xvii.

was his friend, and therefore as little to be credited as his enemies.

Hear, therefore, what many learned men of the church of Rome say, who cannot be suspected of any partiality in favour of him. "The fathers in Trent," saith father Paul, "and the court of Rome, conceived great hope, seeing that so potent an instrument, to contradict the doctrine and rites of the church of Rome, was dead, &c.; and the rather because that death was divulged throughout Italy with many *prodigious* and *fabulous* circumstances, which were ascribed to *miracle*, and the *vengeance* of God, though there were but the *usual accidents*, which do ordinarily happen in the deaths of men of sixty-three years of age."* So that in father Paul's judgment, there was nothing in his death but what was common. Yea, that the very worst circumstances were no other than "such accidents, which happen also many times to *very good Christians*," is acknowledged by a late adversary,† who hath written a book on purpose to disparage him. Yea, that he died in great honour, as well as piously, another hath informed us. "After supper," says Thuanus, "immediately before the night in which he departed, when he was asked, Whether in the eternal life we shall know one another? he said, that we should, and confirmed it by testimonies of Scripture. As many strove who should best express their love to him while he lived, so neither by death could they be drawn from loving him. The citizens of Mansfield contended that he ought to be buried with them, because that was his native soil; but the authority of Frederick, the prince elector, prevailed, that he should be carried to Wittenberg, and there honourably interred."‡ And indeed the transcendent honour that was done to his memory, seems to be that which chiefly provoked his enemies to set their inventions on work to defame him.

The Cardinal's next instance of an unhappy end, is Zuinglius; and why is his death reckoned unhappy? "Because he was slain

* Hist. of the Council of Trent, lib. ii. p. 149.

† Spirit of Martin Luther, p. 104.

‡ "Post cœnam proxime ante noctem quâ decessit, cùm rogaretur, num in illa sempiterna vita simus alter alterum agnituri, ita esse aiebat, et Scripturæ testimoniis confirmabat. Ut certatim eum vivum," &c.—*Thuan. Hist.* lib. ii.

in a war against catholics.”* But is it a strange thing for a man to be killed in a war? Does every one that so ends his days, die miserably? If so, how many hath the pope brought to a miserable end, in sending them to the wars against the Saracens and heretics! Oh, that, they will say, is a glorious death; that merits the brightest crown in heaven! But Zuinglius was killed in a war against catholics.

But stay, the Cardinal makes them catholics too soon; he supposes them catholics *before* Zuinglius was killed, whereas he was to prove them catholics *by his* being killed; for his unhappy death is the note now under debate, by which they were to be known to be of the true church.

But that his death could be no argument that God disapproved of the cause in which he died, is evident; because, to the great grief of his adversaries, the reformed religion, which they hoped would have died together with him, made a greater progress after his death, than it had done before. I shall speak but a word to the two next, because the Cardinal’s spite is chiefly against Calvin, who brings up the rear.

“Æcolampadius,” says Bellarmine, “in the evening went well to bed, and in the morning was, by his wife, found dead in his bed.”† For this also he quotes Cochlæus, though *he* says not “that he went well to bed.” And so far is this from being true, that he had for a long time been ill, and for fifteen days before confined to his bed. But grant it true, I have said enough before in answer to it, in the vindication of Luther; I shall only add, that before the Cardinal had brought this for an instance of an unhappy death in protestants, he should have proved, that papists are not as subject to apoplexies, or any other disease which causes a sudden stoppage of the circulation in the heart, as protestants are.

For Carolostadius, “the ministers of Basil,” he tells us, “in an epistle they published concerning his death, write that he was killed by the devil.”‡ He has not told us where this epistle is,

* “Zuinglius in bello contra catholicos trucidatus est.”—*Bellar.*

† “Æcolampadius cum vesperi sanus cubitum ivisset, mane inventus est ab uxore mortuus in lecto.”—*Bellar.*

‡ “Andream Carolostadium à dæmone interfectum, ministri Basileenses scribunt, in epistola quam ediderunt de morte Carolostadii.”—*Bellar.*

and I despair of ever finding it. I shall therefore send the reader to Petrus Boquinus, a student at Basil when Carolostadius died, who attended his funeral, and hath given an account of his death, and exposed this impudent forgery; as I find him quoted by Melchior Adams.*

I am now come to the fifth and last act of this tragedy, which is so foul a calumny, that any man but an advocate for their church, might be ashamed to own it, viz. "John Calvin was eaten up of worms, as Antiochus, Herod, Maximinus, and Hunricus were;" and not only so, but "invoking the devils, he died blaspheming and cursing."† But what authority hath the Cardinal for this? The testimony of Bolsec, a man of so prostituted a fame, and whose lies are so gross, that many popish writers who have studied to blacken Calvin, have been ashamed to own him.

The charge is two-fold: 1. "That he was eaten up of worms." 2. "That invoking the devils, he died blaspheming and cursing." Both which are as false as any thing ever forged by the father of lies.

1. "That he was eaten up of worms," by which is meant the *lousy disease*, as may be seen by Bolsec's words.‡ Now were this true, yet if we may believe a learned man of the church of Rome, who was one of Calvin's irreconcilable enemies, it is not to be looked upon as so strange a thing; for he has undertaken to prove that nothing is more natural, than for the body of a man to breed vermin and lice, and has produced many famous men who have died of this disease.§ It is certain that this distemper is naturally incident to human bodies, since lice do seem to consist

* In Vita Carolostadii.

† "Joannes Calvinus vermibus consumptus expiravit, ut Antiochus, Herodes, Maximinus, et Hunricus, testatur Hieronymus Bolsecus in ejus vita. Qui etiam addit, eum dæmonibus invocatis, blasphemantem et execrantem obiisse."—*Bellar.*

‡ "Sed ad Calvinum nostrum, et ad gravissimos ejus, variosque morbos quibus misere ad extremum usque spiritum ex cruciatus fuit, revertamur; quem præter eos quos, Beza referente, commemoravimus, eo quoque morbi genere afflictum constat, quo justo Dei judicio, quosdam manifestos et apertos Dei hostes, qui divinum honorem atque gloriam invaserant, sibi que usurpant, vexatos punitosque legimus; is est pedicularis. Nam et hi vermes," &c.—*Vita Joan. Calv. c. 22.*

§ Vasseur, *Annal de l'Eglise Cathedr. de Noyon*, pp. 720, 721.

(chiefly) of that salt, which, together with other humours, does copiously breathe through their pores. This truth may be reasonably gathered from the chemical resolution of lice, and from their medicinal powers and effects in some distempers ; besides that, I have been assured by a learned gentleman, much addicted to physical experiments, that he formerly having three or four days together visited glass furnaces, attending on some experiments there made, has taken from the backs of the glass-makers (after they had sweated profusely in the same shirts for three days together), a great quantity of dry salt, which was caked on the outside of their shirts, and that this salt being put into a glass, and set two or three days in a sunny window, did all become a body of little creeping things like lice. If, therefore, the salt which exhales through the pores of man's body, be the matter of lice, the considering physician may give good reason why and how the disease may be produced, as it often happens to be, in bodies first decayed, and disposed to such a malady by other diseases, where the putrefaction of humours, and the resolution of the animal salts being very great, and the internal heat and motion which should carry them through the pores being too little, this unctuous and saline matter stops in them, and there stays long enough to be animated into lice, which as soon as enlivened creep forth in abundance, and are successively followed by dreadful numbers of the same generation, so long as the patient lives. But I shall say no more of the natural causes from whence this evil may sometimes proceed ; but supposing it now to be as certain a token of the divine vengeance, as Bellarmine would have it, I shall show these two things :

1. That Calvin did *not* die of this disease.

2. In case he did, the church of Rome hath *no reason* to triumph in it.

1. That Calvin did not die of this disease. This will, I think, be manifest : (1.) By reflecting upon the first author of this story. (2.) By considering what others, both papists and protestants (of unquestionable authority) have written concerning Calvin's diseases and death.

(1.) By reflecting upon the first author of this story. Bolsec was the man who first told this tale to the world, and not till *thirteen*

years after Calvin's death. All the rest, Surius, Lingeus, Lessius, &c. are indebted to him for it. Nor do I wonder that they licked up his vomit ; but it may seem more strange that Cardinal Bellarmine should, if we consider these two things :

First, That he was Calvin's mortal enemy. Secondly, That many papists who have made it their study to defame Calvin are ashamed of Bolsec.

First, That he was Calvin's mortal enemy. One main occasion of his enmity was this : Bolsec having quitted his habit (for he was a Carmelite friar at Paris) turned quack, and came to Geneva, where, finding himself in no esteem among the learned physicians, he resolved to set up for a divine: for something he delivered about predestination, he was first gently reprov'd by Calvin ; but he more boldly insisting again upon it, he was then confuted by him openly in the congregation, exposed to public shame, and by the magistrate committed to custody as a seditious person, and not long after by the senate banished the city. This public disgrace he would never forgive Calvin, but ever after bore a mortal hatred against him, though he durst not openly proclaim it till after Calvin was removed into another world, and out of a capacity of confuting his calumnies. This alone is enough, the Romanists themselves being judges, to overthrow the credit of this story. I might also add, that Bolsec was a necessitous, indigent person, and a man of debauched morals, and so every way qualified for the feigning of a story, which he was well assured would be amply rewarded.

Secondly, So gross are his impostures, that many learned papists, who have made it their study to defame Calvin, are ashamed to quote them. Florimond de Raymond, speaking of Calvin, " From this head," saith he, " as from Pandora's box, are come forth all those troops of evils, all those legions of miseries, and those torrents of blood, which have overflowed the better part of Europe. He that would know all these particulars, let him read the authors who have taken the pains to write them." And then quoting Surius, Bolsec, and some others in the margin, he adds, " I have on purpose omitted many things, for the fear I had, that *hatred* had sometimes more power over them than *truth*."*

* " Qui en voudra scavoir toutes les particularités, lise les auteurs qui ont pris la peine de l'écriture. J'en laisse à dessein beaucoup de choses, pour la

(Of those many things he omitted, this foul disease is one.) And Don Peter of St. Romuald, a priest and a monk: "As for Theodore Beza," says he, "Jerome Bolsec, and James Lingey, all that they have written of Calvin is suspected of flattery, or of too great *sharpness against him*."* It is no wonder he should say, that Beza is suspected of flattery, but doubtless had not Bolsec's calumnies been very broad and ill-coloured, a monk would never have suspected them.

(2). The falsehood of this tale will be further manifest to all men, by considering what other persons, both protestants and papists (whose authority, in this matter at least, is unquestionable), have written concerning Calvin's diseases and death.

First, For protestants, I shall insist only upon Beza's history of his life. He pretending to tell us all his diseases, makes no mention of this; besides that the account he gives of him some days before, and at his death, is utterly inconsistent with it.

Bolsec says, "That from his ulcers, and from his whole body, issued most noisome stinks, by which he was loathsome to himself, and his family; and that his domestics reported, that for this very reason he liked not to be visited."†

Now Beza tells us, that after he had finished his will, viz. April 26, a month and one day before his death, he signified to the syndics, and all the senators, that he had a desire to visit them once more in their senate-house before he died, and hoped to be carried thither the next day: they desired him to consult his health, and sent him word that they would come to him, which accordingly they did: after he had thanked them for their favours, and given them much good advice, he gave to every one of them his right hand, and dismissed them weeping. April 28, at his request, all the ministers within the jurisdiction of that city came

crainte que j'ai que quelquefois la haine ait eu plus pouvoir sur eux, que la vérité."—*De la Naissance de l'Hérésie*, lib. vii. c. 8. p. 879.

* "Car pour Théodore de Bèze, Hiérôme Bolsec, Médecin de Lion, et Jaques Lingey, Ecossais, Docteur de Sorbonne, tout ce qu'ils en ont écrit, est suspect de flatterie, ou de trop grande aigreur contre lui."—*Thres. Chronolog. et Historique l'an. 1550*.

† "Cum ex ulceribus totoque corpore gravissimi fœtores emanarent, ob quorum graveolentiam et sibi ipsi gravis, et quæ eum circumstabat, familiæ erat. Quam causam fuisse etiam hi ejus domestici narrarunt, quod visitari se nollet."—*Vit. Calv.* c. 22.

to him, to whom, after he had given an exhortation, he likewise reached out his right hand to each one in particular, and sent them away with heavy hearts and wet eyes. May 19 (and he died May 27), the ministers being wont on that day to eat together, a supper was prepared for them at his house; and he being carried to them, from his bed into the next room, "I now, brethren," saith he, "come to take my last farewell, I shall never more sit at table." Before supper was ended, when he required to be carried back again to his bed chamber, he said with a smiling countenance, "This wall between us will not hinder, but though absent in body, I shall be present in spirit with you."

I need repeat no more; if this already said be true, what Bolsec says must be false. And that this is true, every one must grant (considering the time when, and the place where it was published), who grants that Beza was in his wits; for he published it *presently* after Calvin's death at Geneva, where, if but one tittle had been false, every citizen almost must have known it: if the senators had not all visited him, and the ministers all met at his house, a few days before his death, as Beza reports, every one of those senators, and every one of those ministers, would have given him the lie, and proclaimed him to the world for an impudent impostor; especially those who were Calvin's enemies would have noised it abroad; whereas not one, either great or small, was found, who contradicted one word of it.

Secondly, But we need not the testimony of Beza, or any other protestant; the papists themselves, even those who have written much more than is due to defame him, shall be his defenders; for if they take no notice of this disease, who, could they have found any colour for it, would have made the world ring with it, it is certain they took it for a fable.

Now whosoever will take the pains to peruse the book quoted in the margin,* he will find many of these collected to his hands; but because the book is not in a language that every one understands, I shall touch upon two or three of them. Florimond, when he reckons up his diseases, gives not the least intimation of this.† Jaques Desmay insists vehemently on those diseases Calvin

* La Défense de Calvin contre l'Outrage fait à sa Mémoire, &c. Par Charles Drelincourt.

† La Naissance de l'Hérésie, lib. vii. c. 10, p. 888.

was afflicted with toward the end of his life, as imposthumes, hemorrhoids, stone, gout, in short, no less than a dozen; and then insults over him, making them as visible tokens of God's vengeance upon him, as his smiting the Philistines in the hinder parts, and putting them to a perpetual shame. Now can it be imagined that he would have omitted this, could he have found the least show of truth for it, since this would have stood him in more stead than all the rest? I shall add but one more, viz. Jaques le Vasseur, who is so far from forgetting any thing that might be to Calvin's disadvantage, that he tells many silly ridiculous tales on purpose to disgrace him, and yet hath not one word of this loathsome disease, or any thing like it. I think I need say no more to vindicate Calvin from this ugly aspersion.

But let us now suppose it true, and see what the Romanists will get by it. Had indeed this disease fallen upon Calvin, but never upon any man of the church of Rome, they might then seem to have had something whereof to glory; but if for *one Calvin*, we can name *many* greater men of the *Roman communion* who have had this distemper, they were then ill-advised in objecting this against protestants. I shall at present name three only, an emperor, a king, and a pope. The emperor is Arnulphus, the natural son of Charles the Great;* the king is Philip II. king of Spain,† a zealous persecutor of the protestants; the pope is Clement VII.‡

* "Minutis quippe vermibus, quos pedunculos aiunt, vehementer afflictus spiritum reddidit. Fertur autem, quod præfati vermes adeo scaturirent, ut nullis medicorum curis minui possent."—*Luitprand. de Reb. Imperat. et Reg.* lib. i. c. 9. "Arnulphus autem . . . ut Dei nutu pediculari morbo brevi consumptus sit."—*Plat. in Vita Formos.* "Demum imperator Arnulphus longa infirmitate tabefactus, nulla arte medicabili poterat adjuvari, quin a pediculis consumeretur."—*Mart. Polon.* lib. iv. p. 318.

† "Herode, le Empereur Arnoul, fils naturel de Charlemagne, Acastus fils de Pelias, Calisthenes d'Olinthien, Sylla, Clement VII. et Philip II. roi d'Espagne, furent mangés des pous."—*M. Chevreau, le Tab. de la Fortune*, lib. iii. c. 5. "Quos (sc. abscessus) pravo humore se per totum corpus diffundente, pediculorum tanta eluvie secuta est, ut vix indusio exui, et a quatuor hominibus paulum suspensio in linteo corpore, quantum per infirmitatem licebat, a duobus aliis per vices detergi posset. Demum post tertianam febrem hectica semper eum conficiente, et accedentibus ad eam plagosis in manibus et pedibus ulceribus, dysenteria, tenesmo, et hydropsi jam manifesta, et verminante semper illa pediculorum eluvie," &c.—*Jacobo Aug. Thuan. Hist.* 120.

‡ M. Chevreau. *ibid.*

Secondly, I should now proceed to the other part of the charge, which is blacker and more frightful, viz. that "Calvin invoking the devils, died blaspheming and cursing;" but I need not insist upon it, because nothing hath been said to expose the falsehood of the former, but what is as truly applicable to this also: if, therefore, the reader please to recollect what hath been already delivered, he will find this equally confuted by it; the story hath not been given by any of the numerous vigilant, malignant, and industrious enemies of Calvin, except originally by the notoriously false Bolsec. Though I might have added several other convincing arguments, had I not already exceeded the bounds allotted to this discourse; but the truth is, the calumny is so broad and naked, that it confutes itself.

I think it is now evident enough, that the church of Rome can have no advantage against the protestants from the unhappy deaths of their prime pastors and teachers; for, as Bellarmine himself pretends but to five such, so I have made it appear, that the stories he tells of these, are all of them either plainly false, or not pertinent. Happy protestants! So happy in this respect, that if it might pass for a note of the true church, they need desire to be tried by no other; and since Bellarmine, in the next chapter, boasts of the miraculous success of the papists against heretics, I desire them to consider, whether it was not at least next to a miracle, that one Luther, who opposed himself to all the united forces of the papacy, should live so long, and at last come to his grave in peace. It may, as I said before, seem strange to some, that Cardinal Bellarmine should abuse the world by such feigned stories as he does; but let it be remembered that he was a *Jesuit*, and the wonder will then be the less.

Among all those princes, and other secular powers, who have (under God) been the great defenders of the protestant faith, the Cardinal hath told us of no unhappy ends; we may guess at the reason, for if he could, we cannot imagine he would have spared them, since these would have been much more to his purpose, than Pharaoh, Antiochus, Herod, Nero, Domitian, Maximinus, Julian, and some others, which he has irrelevantly enough alleged. Though had he produced many examples of this sort, one queen Elizabeth would have been enough to have put in the

balance against them all. Having shown how much the protestants are beholden to Bellarmine for this note,

2. Let us now see whether the church of Rome can make as fair a claim to it; or rather, whether she, which will needs be the only church, will not by this character be unchurched. To begin with her churchmen.

I might insist upon the dismal ends of Cardinal Wolsey, Charles Caraffa, Cæsar Borgia, Angelot, and many other cardinals; but because if any rank of men among them be exempted from this sad fate, we may in reason expect it should be the bishops of Rome, who by their flatterers are made, not only equal to, but in many things superior to the angels, who cannot die; I shall, therefore, more especially reflect upon them; for if we find that the popes themselves not only *die like men*, but have had, many of them, the most unhappy deaths, we may safely conclude, that the church of Rome will never be able by this mark to prove herself the true church.

We have already heard the unhappy deaths of pope Nicholas III., Paul II., Clement VI., Leo X., and Clement VII.; to which I shall add a few more, out of many that might be mentioned.

Pope Clement II.* and Victor III.† were poisoned. Pope John X.‡ and Benedict VI.§ were both strangled in prison. Pope John XXII., when he promised himself a long life, was suddenly crushed to death, by the fall of his bed-chamber, in his palace at Viterbium.|| John XII. was smitten, says Luitprand, by the devil, in the very act of *adultery*, and died of the wound within eight days;¶ Stella tells us, that he was stabbed by the husband of the adulteress;** Martinus says that he died in adultery

* Plat in Vit. † Jo. Stella, p. 160. Mart. Polon. Chron. lib. iv. p. 363.

‡ Mart. Polon. lib. iv. p. 334.

§ Mart. Polon. p. 341.

|| Papir. Masson. fol. 188.

¶ Luitprand, de Reb. Imperat. et Reg. lib. vi. c. 11. "Quadam nocte, extra Romam, dum se cum cujusdam viri uxore oblectaret, in temporibus adeo a diabolo est percussus, ut intra dierum octo spatium eodem sit vulnere mortuus." "One night, as he was gratifying himself with another man's wife, outside Rome, he was stabbed in the temples by the devil, and within eight days died of the wound."

** Stella, ad ann. 958. p. 133.

suddenly without repentance;* in this they all agree, that he received his death's wound in the very act of lewdness, "the devil well rewarded him for the honour he was wont to do him in drinking his health."† Pope Boniface VII.‡ and Boniface VIII.§ both died as shamefully as they lived wickedly. Benedict IX. (the writer of his life tells us) was seen after death in a monstrous likeness, and being asked (after he had told who he was) why he appeared in such a horrid shape, he answered, "Because I lived like a beast, without law and reason, it is the will of God, and of St. Peter, that I should bear the shape of a beast, rather than of a man."|| I should not have mentioned this, had I not found it confirmed by Cardinal Baronius,¶ who also gives the reasons from Petrus Damiani, why he appeared in the compounded shape of a bear or an ass, and adds the reason himself, why he appeared by a mill.** Alexander VI., by the mistake of his cup-bearer, drank himself that deadly wine which he had prepared for the poisoning of his cardinals, and died forthwith.†† Paul IV. went off the stage with as much infamy as his enemies could desire; scarce was the breath out of his body, when the people, mad with fury, ran through the city to destroy whatsoever had been done by him; cursed the memory of the pope, and of all Caraffas (the name of the pope's family); burnt the new prison of the inquisition which he had made for heretics; then running to the Capitol, demolished his marble statue, drew the head of it through the streets of the city, and after many contumelies, threw it into the Tiber; in fine, an edict was promulgated, by which all were commanded, under the heaviest penalties, to deface the arms of the Caraffian family, in what place soever of the city they were found.‡‡ This may, I think, suffice for popes.

It were easy to observe several circumstances, in the deaths of Morgan, Gardiner, Sanders, and others, which, men would be apt to conclude, were special indications of God's displeasure against

* Chron. lib. iv. p. 353. † Luitprand, lib. vi. c. 7. ‡ Plat. et Stella.

§ Mart. Polon. lib. iv. p. 439. Stella, ann. 1291. Plat.

|| Plat. Mart. Polon. Stella. ¶ Baron. Annal. an. 1054. N. 54, 55.

** Ibid. N. 56.

†† Papir. Masson. lib. vi. fol. 374. Richer. Hist. Conc. General. lib. iv. par. 1. p. 144.

‡‡ Onuphr. in Vit.

the cause ; but it is needless, because the advantage of the protestants, as to their churchmen, is already sufficiently manifest.

I might now proceed to secular persons, and show that their advantage is as great with respect to them. It was before observed, that the Cardinal has not produced so much as one unhappy death of a protestant prince. There has been one indeed, here in England, since the Cardinal's death, I mean king Charles I. ; but what is one to the many that might be mentioned of popish princes ? In France alone, within the space of threescore years, we meet with no fewer than five, immediately succeeding one the other, without so much as one happy death between, viz. Henry II., Francis II., Charles IX., Henry III., and Henry IV. I now leave the Romanists themselves to make the conclusion which most naturally follows from the premises ; and for a conclusion of this discourse, desire them to observe the difference between Belarmine's authorities and mine : whereas what he reports of the unhappy deaths of protestants, he has taken it from papists, and from such papists who were their most implacable enemies ; I have not said a word of the unhappy ends of cardinals, popes, and popish princes, but what I have borrowed from their own writers.

THE
FIFTEENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED;
VIZ.

TEMPORAL FELICITY.*

BY BISHOP GROVE.

WE are now come to the last of those notes, by which the Cardinal would persuade us the true church may be easily known. He laboured hard to make them up so many; but he was resolved never to leave the raising of notes, till he had his full complement of fifteen. And in this he seems to have been put to such a shift, as some generals sometimes are, who, finding themselves in straits, draw out their front to a great length, and fill up their ranks with sutlers' boys, and other weak attendants on the camp, merely to make a show, and amuse the enemy with a vain appearance of numbers, when they have reason to dread the issue of the battle. It is certain no man before him ever counted up so many notes as he has done. Some, he tells us,† make but two, some three, some four, some six, some ten or eleven, as they please, and one, he thinks, reckons up a dozen notes; which is the most that any ever durst venture upon, till he himself came on the stage. And then he at last makes a new discovery, that

* "Ultima nota est, Felicitas Temporalis, divinitus iis collata qui Ecclesiam defenderunt." "The last note is, temporal felicity conferred by God on those who have defended the church." — BELLAR. *de Notis Ecclesiæ*. cap. 18.

† Bellarmine, *de Notis Eccles.* cap. 3.

they were all short in their account; for that the notes of the church were just fifteen. So that here must be three at least, purely his own, that were never heard of before; and for which they, that like them, must stand for ever obliged to Cardinal Bellarmine's happy invention. But then what a miserable condition was the church in for many ages! For if there be no salvation out of their church, as they of the Romish persuasion confidently affirm; and if this church is to be known by certain notes, as they endeavour to prove; and if these notes be dubious and arbitrary, and often differing, according to the fancy of their several writers, as cannot be denied; then what hopes can there ever be of finding out the true church, and ending the controversy this way? And if two or three notes are sufficient to determine the matter, as some have thought, to what purpose are we troubled with all the rest? But if the whole number be judged necessary to make it evident, what a hazardous estate were men in, before this great author had perfected the list! And their danger continued a long time; for they were never acquainted with divers of these notes, till towards the latter end of the sixteenth century.

But the Cardinal himself seems to be sensible of the weakness of many of them, when he acknowledges, that "the moderns commonly assign but four, and those taken out of the Constantinopolitan creed, where the church is declared to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."* And these alone, without the help of any other fictitious supernumerary notes, are abundantly sufficient to demonstrate that any church, to which they do belong, is most certainly a true church. And therefore to gain credit to those he has thought fit to add, he tells us they may be "some way reduced to these four." But for my part, I do not understand how it can possibly be done. And not to mention any of the rest, I will instance only in this last note I am about to examine. "Temporal felicity," (which he cautiously restrains to success in war) for aught that I can perceive, is not by any means reducible to any of the four. It will not evidence the unity of the church; for if this note be allowed, then Mahomet the Great, Solyman the Magnificent, Gustavus Adolphus, and divers others,

* Bellarmine, de Notis Eccles. cap. 3.

were all good catholics in their time ; and instead of one, we must have as many churches as there have been fortunate and victorious princes in the world, that have fought for the propagation or defence of the most different religions. Neither is it any better argument for *sanctity* ; unless to such as can esteem *gain to be godliness*, and account Turks and Saracens holy men. Much less can catholicism be proved from it, since good success was never known to attend always on the same side ; and the catholic church and universal empire, whatever ambitious men may dream, are never likely to be the same thing. And least of all can we from hence gather any church to be apostolical. The primitive Christians were unacquainted with the glories of worldly triumphs. They subdued the nations, but it was with spiritual weapons : they conquered the remotest parts of the earth, but it was by the holiness of their doctrine, the blamelessness of their lives, and the greatness of their sufferings. The apostles did not march out to convert the world with crosses on their breasts, and javelins in their hands : one of them once drew a sword in his Master's quarrel, but was presently commanded to put it up again, with a severe commination. So that I do not see to which of the four received notes this of temporal felicity can be tolerably reduced. I shall therefore examine it as it stands by itself.

But by the way, I cannot but observe, how subtly the Cardinal has endeavoured to secure this note ; which he must needs know was very liable to many material exceptions. And at once to prevent them all, he tells us roundly, that “catholic princes never adhered unto God heartily, but that they most easily triumphed over their enemies.” This he very confidently affirms, but without any offer at a proof : but yet this will furnish him with an evasion that may be always ready. For whenever any of those princes, which he calls catholic, shall be shown to have been unfortunate in their adventures, it may be quickly replied, that they did not then “heartily adhere unto God.” And the contrary may be asserted with equal assurance ; and so here is a controversy started, about a matter of fact, which all the men upon earth are never able to decide. For the intentions and inward dispositions of men's minds are discernible to none, but the Searcher of hearts. And how then can this be pretended to

be a note by which we should know the true church, when the sole condition, upon which the evidence of it is made to depend, is to us altogether impossible to be known?

And this alone might be sufficient to evince the vanity of it: but yet I shall endeavour to make it appear further, by showing,

I. That temporal felicity cannot be esteemed a note of the church.

II. That the instances the Cardinal brings, do not prove it.

III. And that there are many examples of infidels and heretics, (as he accounts them,) who have been as prosperous and successful in the world, as any of his catholics. If these things may be severally made out, then the church of Rome is likely to get but little advantage by this fifteenth note.

I. And, "that temporal felicity cannot be esteemed a note of the church," seems evident enough, and that principally for these reasons:

1. Because God has nowhere promised it in all the holy Gospel; and it is no better than vain arrogance, and a fond kind of presumption, to make that a mark of the church, which is neither essential to the constitution of it, nor yet inseparably annexed to it by virtue of any divine promise. The Jews indeed were encouraged in their obedience, by the proposal of many temporal blessings; and if they did faithfully and conscientiously observe the law, they were assured of great and miraculous victories over their enemies. "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight," Lev. xxvi. 8. But Christianity, which is a more spiritual religion, that is established upon better promises, and has more full and express revelations of everlasting happiness than they had, has no ground at all to flatter itself with the foolish hopes of external felicities and worldly glories. I cannot find one word in all the New Testament, upon which such an idle imagination can be probably grounded. Nay, on the contrary, distress and afflictions seem to be the most ordinary portion that our blessed Lord has been pleased to allot the best of his followers in this life. He told his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," John xvi. 33. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. iii. 12. The

expressions are plain ; and many more might be brought to the same purpose : and if they could be all warrantably restrained to some certain persons and times, yet they would afford but a very feeble argument to prove that temporal felicity was a note of the church ; and if any better can be produced, it is more than the Cardinal has done. His error in this is very like that of the Jews, who anciently did, and still do expect a triumphant worldly kingdom in the days of their Messias. But they are far the more excusable ; for, as I said, they had some *promises of temporal blessings*, and so might have some colour for such a mistake : but it is hard to frame any apology for one who professes to believe in a crucified Saviour, that shall distinguish his church by the same character which they did, without the least show of a promise to support it. It is to be feared, when he invented this, that his eyes might be something dazzled with purple robes and red hats, or his fancy intoxicated with the false glories of extirpating heretics by force of arms.

2. But be that as it will, this note must fail him again, because for several ages together the church could not pretend to any such thing as temporal felicity. Three hundred years at least were passed over in nothing almost but continual persecutions. Christianity was made the common object of the hatred and fury of the people, and wicked and inhuman princes spent most of their rage and cruelty upon it. They racked their inventions to find out new and exquisite ways of torture ; the prisons were thronged with crowds of confessors, and the theatres and places of public execution were sprinkled with the blood and strewed with the ashes of the holy martyrs ; and a long time it was that these lamentable spectacles were very frequent, and when they happened to have little intermission, it was rather a refreshment than a rest ; nothing but a space of taking breath, that they might gather strength, and prepare themselves for another encounter : and all this while to be sure the Christians could obtain no other victory over their adversaries, but by convincing their infidelity by their patient suffering. Before Constantine showed them what it was, they were great strangers to temporal felicity, and how often they have had it interrupted since that I will not now inquire ; but whatever this may be of the *Roman*, it is not a note

of the *true catholic* church, for that we know flourished divers ages, in the greatest purity, without it.

3. And if this be not proof enough, yet the unspeakable miseries which the church of God must endure in the days of antichrist, is an undeniable demonstration that this note cannot be allowed. The Cardinal himself confesses,* and I think all the writers of his communion do generally agree, that the antichristian tyranny shall far exceed all the cruelties that were inflicted by the worst of the heathen emperors. This others believe as well as they; but then those conceive that some of these grievous calamities may be already past in the sharp and lingering torments, the many dreadful massacres, and the cruel and promiscuous slaughters of later times, which can scarce be paralleled by any thing the Christians suffered of old under pagan idolaters. But Bellarmine and the rest of the church of Rome, for some reasons, do imagine that all this is still to come: but be it past or future, it quite overthrows the credit of this fifteenth note; for the state, which by his own confession the church must be in during that antichristian persecution, is very inconsistent with temporal felicity. There is no stress, therefore, to be laid upon this, no promise can be pretended for it, and the time has certainly once been, when it was not, and it is frankly acknowledged, that the time shall come again, when it will not be, a note of the church.

II. This might be sufficient to put an end to this dispute: but because the only way the Cardinal has taken to confirm his opinion, is by collecting some historical passages, which he thinks make for his purpose, I shall briefly examine several of them, and make it appear that the instances he brings do not prove what he intends.

And as for all those taken out of the Old Testament, they were particular and signal successes conferred by Almighty God upon his faithful people, according to some special promises formerly made them, as I have intimated before; and they might be accounted subsequent signs of their obedience, but not of their being the *true* church, for so they were in all conditions; as well when they were oppressed by the Philistines, as when they drove

* Bellar. de Rom. Pontif. lib. iii. c. 4, and 17. Corn. a Lap. in Apocal. cap. 3.

the Canaanites out of the land ; as well in Babylon, as in Palestine ; no less in the midst of their most grievous afflictions, than in their most prosperous and flourishing estate. And after Jeroboam had made the separation, the two tribes were the true church still, and the ten were the schismatics, notwithstanding the various events of their wars, and that the victory inclined sometimes to the one side, and sometimes to the other.

To what he says of Constantine and Theodosius, and some other of the ancient emperors of Rome, it might be reply enough to tell him, that their successes, supposing his note to be true, would make nothing to the purpose he contends for ; because, as has been often proved, those times were not infected with any of those gross errors which the modern church of Rome has been guilty of.

But yet to show what partiality he uses in the choice of these instances, I will inquire a little into one of them. He tells us, that “ a vast army of the Goths, of more than a hundred thousand, was totally defeated in one battle, and Rhadagaisus their king, together with his son, taken and slain, and not so much as one of the Romans killed or wounded.” Thus he from St. Augustine relates it.* Others say there was no battle, but that this huge multitude of above two hundred thousand men, or, as some make them, double that number, being enclosed among the barren mountains of Fesula, were so extremely weakened with famine, that Rhadagaisus endeavoured to make his escape alone, but being taken prisoner, was put to death, and the rest became an easy prey to their enemies. This the Cardinal mentions as the felicity of Honorius, and it was indeed a very wonderful success ; but then it is almost the only thing that happened well in all his time : and notwithstanding this miraculous victory, he was one of the most unfortunate emperors of them all. He suffered the capital city of the world to be taken by Alarick the Goth,† without ever daring to attempt to relieve it, though the siege lasted about two years ; but he was all that while very wisely diverting himself, and feeding his poultry at Ravenna, and his mind was so intent upon his business, that when one of his officers brought him the

* De Civit. Dei, lib. v. c. 23. Oros. lib. vii. cap. 26. Paul. Diacon. lib. 13.

† See Procop. Vandal. i.

news that Rome was lost, he had not a thought of that ancient, and formerly glorious seat of the empire, but imagined it had been nothing but a *cock* he had of the same name, and was much troubled, and mightily surprised that the poor bird should be dead so soon, that took meat out of his imperial hand but a very little time before !* Besides this fatal blow at the head, that was so lightly regarded, many other cities and towns were utterly destroyed, the country laid wholly waste, such multitudes of the people most miserably butchered all Italy over, that it was but thinly inhabited for some ages after ; and this and other incursions of the barbarous nations in those days had so shaken the state of it, that we must begin to date the ruin of the western empire from the reign of Honorius ; and he that can produce *him* for an example of “temporal felicity,” may be fit to believe that it is a note of the church.

III. I shall pass over the rest of his instances till he comes to the holy war, and there he takes notice, how “the Christians then being about Antioch, with a small number, and those in great despair, and in a very languishing condition for want of necessary provisions, and the enemy at hand with a potent and numerous army, and when they were in this distress, it was at length seasonably *revealed* to somebody *where the holy lance was*, which was brought into the field in the nick of time, and carried before the soldiers, and *three holy men appeared in the clouds fighting for them*; and by this means they unexpectedly got an entire victory, with the slaughter of a hundred thousand of the Turks.” I will not question the truth of any part of this story, but let any man consider the various successes of that war, and that it was concluded to the advantage of the *infidels*, who remained *masters of all at last*, after so much blood and treasure expended, and so many of the bravest spirits of Europe thrown away upon those tedious and fruitless expeditions ; and he will be apt to suspect that here the Cardinal did manifestly prevaricate, and that he had a real design to betray his own church, and give up the cause to Mahomet.

After this he boasts of a notable victory over the Albigenes ; “where a hundred thousand of heretics were totally routed by

* Procop. Vandal. i.

his catholics, that were not the tenth part of their number." It is true, the histories of those times do generally mention a very great overthrow given those poor people, in a battle, by a very inconsiderable handful of men under the command of Simon Mountfort; and that Peter, king of Arragon, who came to their assistance, was slain on the place, and Raymund, earl of Tholouse, forced to fly; and upon this occasion, to strengthen the Cardinal's argument as much as is possible, I think it will not be amiss to call to mind some other of their glorious victories over these Albigenses. These, we must know, are a sort of *heretics* (so say the Romanists!) that were spread far and near, and had a long time infected the church; some say they had continued ever since the days of the apostles.* Pope Innocent III. very desirous to find a remedy for this inveterate evil, appoints divers eminent preachers to go into parts where they were thought to be most numerous, and teach nothing there but the pure doctrine of the church of Rome, and endeavour by this means to convince them of their supposed errors: but this way not succeeding, the supposed *heretics* remaining obstinate still, notwithstanding the diligence of the missionaries, he bethinks himself of a more effectual expedient. Since persuasions will not prevail, he is resolved to try whether terror and force may not have a greater power of conviction than argument; therefore he publishes a *crusado* against the heretics, as had been formerly done against the *infidels* in the east, and sets forth his "bull of plenary indulgences" to all that should engage in this sacred militia, and makes them as sure of heaven, as those were that should be sent on his errand to the Holy Land. Upon this extraordinary encouragement, great multitudes flock together from all parts, and full of zeal and rage they march on, and perform many notable exploits, to the eternal honour of themselves, and him that put them on that pious work!! In one city they put threescore thousand to the sword, sparing neither sex nor age; and when the tender-hearted soldiers found there were some catholics in the place, they desire to know, whether these might not be admitted to quarter. The pope's legate, that was attending the action, commands them to make no

* See Usher de Christ. Eccl. Success. et Stat. cap. 10, sect. 23, 24, &c.

distinction, for fear a heretic might escape under that pretence; and he excuses the severity of the order with a scripture expression, "The Lord knoweth who are his!" This beginning was enough to strike terror into all that heard it, and then they go on valiantly, still doing great execution wherever they come; whenever any town or castle was surrendered, it was always upon these articles, "They that would be converted, had their lives; they that refused, were hanged or burnt." After they had proceeded a while in this manner, Simon Mountfort, a stout zealot, is by common consent chosen general of the *pilgrims* (for so they were called), and appointed commander-in-chief for this new kind of holy war, with a promise of the government of what had already been, or should happen hereafter to be taken from the heretics. He, armed with a sufficient power, quickly forces Raymund de Tholouse out of his dominions. The poor ejected prince flies to the great Lateran council for relief; they, as if the question had been about matters of faith, suffered the debate to come before them, and, depriving Raymund, constitute Simon earl of Tholouse. Raymund hereupon retires into Spain; Simon's new subjects suddenly revolt, and force him to go himself, and send his wife to several courts to beg such supplies as might be sufficient to reduce them to obedience; but before that could be done, he is crushed to pieces with a great stone out of an engine, as he lay before Tholouse. Soon after, his younger son Guy is likewise slain at another town; Almaric the elder, and heir to his father, highly enraged with these misfortunes that fell so thick upon his family, swears desperately that he would never remove the siege, till he was master of the place; but notwithstanding this insolent bravado, he is constrained to go away in disgrace, aggravated with the guilt of a presumptuous, foolish oath. Before this, Raymund was returned, and entered again upon his legal inheritance, and died at last in possession of it, and left the succession to his son, when Almaric was fain to wander up and down the world, earnestly entreating all that pleased to pity his condition, to afford him some succours, that he might be enabled to endeavour the recovery of what had been lately usurped by his father. And now upon a review of the successes on both sides thus far, the heretics

seem clearly to have the advantage. And for what followed after this, it is an argument of the particular care the divine providence has always had in the preservation of those distressed Albigenes, who could never be destroyed by the many potent combinations that have been made against them, and the violent persecutions they have endured within these last five hundred years; but in spite of all the malice of their enemies, the remains of them at this day are enough to exercise the valour of another Mountfort, if any unhappy age should chance to produce one.

For his catholic victories in Switzerland and the Low Countries, if the Cardinal had pleased to acquaint us what they were, perhaps they might be easily balanced; however, for aught I can learn, the protestant cantons are in as good condition as the other. I am sure the confederate provinces of the Netherlands are grown a very rich and potent commonwealth, and if they have thrived only by their losses, then they may plead miracles in confirmation of their religion; which he makes a note of the true church, as well as success in warlike adventures.

He just mentions a victory of Charles V. over the Lutherans, 1547, obtained, as he says, by a "divine miracle." I suppose he means at the battle in Mulberg, where the forces of John Frederick, elector of Saxony, were overthrown, and himself taken prisoner; and I confess it was a considerable victory, but I cannot understand the miracle of it. But grant there were one, yet it must be remembered, that afterwards Charles himself was driven out of Germany by a Lutheran prince, Maurice of Saxony,* and forced to clamber over the Alps by torch-light, in a dark and rainy night, among craggy rocks, and steep and slippery mountains, carried in a horse-litter by reason of his illness; and when he had with great labour and hazard overcome the difficulty of the passage, and was gotten pretty well out of danger, the fright had made such impression on him, that he still conceived Maurice was at his heels; insomuch that when he was met by the Venetian ambassador, with a body of horse, sent by the senate for the security of his person, he was afraid of his own succours, and could hardly be persuaded that they were not some of the enemy's troops. Charles was indeed a gallant and generous prince, adorned with many

* Thuan. lib. x.

heroical virtues, becoming the greatness of the character he bore, and had been often crowned with a success answerable to the resolution and bravery of his mind ; but this hasty and lamentable flight lost him the fruit, and did something eclipse the glory of his former victories, and made him frequently complain of the change of his fortune. And being by this and some other misadventures he met with, made sensible of the vanity, and grown weary of the incumbrances of the world, he resigned the empire, and his other dominions, to a cruel bigot and an unnatural son, betwixt devotion and discontent, and retired into a monastery in Spain, where he ended his days. And this I hope might prepare him for an eternal, but it is no part of his temporal felicity ; nor can it ever from hence be proved, that that of which he professes himself a member, was, therefore, the only true church : or if it were so, as the Cardinal thinks, when he took Frederick of Saxony, it was certainly otherwise when he ran away from Maurice of Saxony. And here I might conclude the examination of this note, for, since he attempts to prove it no other way, but by an induction of particulars, if he had failed but in one instance, as I have shown he has done in many, the whole argument could be of no force.

III. But to illustrate and confirm the matter farther, I shall bring some examples of infidels, and such as he esteems heretics, who have been as prosperous and successful in the world, and gained as signal victories, as any of his catholics.

When Uladislaus, king of Poland and Hungary, had concluded a peace with the sultan Amurath II.* and solemnly confirmed it with an oath ; pope Eugenius IV. writes him word, that the league being made with the enemies of the christian faith, without his consent, could not be valid. Julian the legate absolves the king and the rest from the oath they had taken, and with many specious pretences persuades them to break with the Turk, and enter into an actual war. Amurath, who was now withdrawn into Asia, hearing what had happened, and being informed of the preparations that were making against him, returns unexpectedly with a mighty force, and meets with the Christians not far from Varna, where was begun a most bloody and obstinate fight, which lasted, as they report, for three days with dubious success.

* Cuspinian. in Amurath. I.

Amurath at length, upon the sight of the picture of our Saviour on the cross, that was painted in some of the christian banners, passionately prays him to avenge the injury done to his name by those his faithless followers, who had so lately sworn the league, and so basely and perfidiously broken it, without any provocation. In the end the Christians are put to the rout, Uladislaus is slain, the brave Huniades hardly escapes, the treacherous legate, who had drawn them into all this distress, is found upon the ground stript and wounded, and ready to expire, many other great prelates and nobles are killed on the place, and a miserable slaughter made of about thirty thousand of the common soldiers. A remarkable instance to show that success does not always attend the papal benediction.

The unfortunate battle of Mohatz* was almost parallel to this in some circumstances; for Solyman the Turkish emperor, invading Hungary with a potent army, Paul Tomoree, first a soldier, afterwards a monk, and then an archbishop, is chosen general against him, under Lewis the young king. He hastily engages the enemy, and is utterly defeated, himself slain in the field, with many more eminent churchmen, and other persons of the best quality; his head is fixed upon a pole, and carried about the Turkish army in scornful triumph. Lewis, a prince of great hopes, scarce yet come to the flower of his youth, is drowned in a ditch, and found sticking in the mud, above a month after the fight. I might add many more the like successes of the Turks and Saracens against those that have defended the church, which the Cardinal esteems the only true one; but I think these two may suffice.

It were not difficult to collect numerous examples of those he calls heretics, who have often put his catholics to the worst; I shall name but one, which, for the multiplicity of good fortune, may well serve instead of many; and that is queen Elizabeth, whose memory will always be honourable, when envy and detraction have done their utmost. At her coming to the crown, she found herself involved in war with two potent neighbours, Scotland and France; she was destitute of allies abroad, and not secured of the affections of her people at home. The many and great revolutions

* Fumee Hist. Hungar. book i. Cuspin. Orat. Protrept.

that had been in matters of religion especially, in the three foregoing reigns, had created such violent animosities, and so very different interests in the nation, that they seemed to threaten her government with perpetual faction and disorder ; but all these difficulties that might be thought insuperable, were happily overcome, or wisely composed, and her long reign of more than four-and-forty years passed over with such a constant series and tenour of success, that my lord Bacon, who was intimately acquainted with the proceedings of those times, and admirably well qualified to judge, has left us a particular treatise of “ the felicities of queen Elizabeth.”* Among these I shall not now number the many escapes she had out of the hands of desperate villains, who frequently attempted to assassinate her sacred person, but only take notice of some other conspiracies and rebellions, and that famous invasion of 1588.

The first open rebellion was begun in the north, and carried on by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland,† who having gotten together betwixt four and five (Catena says twelve) thousand men, they declare, “ that they took arms only to restore the catholic religion, and the ancient laws of the realm ;”‡ but upon the approach of seventeen hundred of the queen’s forces, and the report of more that were to follow, they suddenly disperse, and fly into Scotland, where Northumberland remaining is delivered up, and beheaded at York, 1572 ; Westmoreland gets over into Flanders, is allowed a small pension from the king of Spain, lives miserably all the rest of his days, and at last dies in exile, 1584.

The many insurrections in Ireland, in which the cause of the Cardinal’s church was always main pretence, which were encouraged by the pope, and often strengthened with foreign assistance, were all of them happily suppressed.§ The last was the longest and most dangerous of all ; but a few months before her death, she received the joyful news of the defeat and submission of the rebels, and so left both her kingdoms in a settled and peaceable condition.

* See Bacon. *Resuscitat.* p. 181.

† Girolam. Caten. *Vita del’ Gloriosiss. Papa Pio V.* solo per remetter la religion catholica, &c. p. 115.

‡ *Cambd. Eliz. ann.* 1569.

§ *Ibid.* 1602.

But among all the remarkable successes of that great queen, the timely detection of the grand design against her life and government, must not be forgotten, though it never came to the decision of a battle. Pius V., who was resolved by all means to work her ruin, in a furious kind of zeal, which by some is highly commended, by his “declaratory sentence,”* deprives her of all her dominions, absolves her subjects from their allegiance, and puts her and her adherents under an anathema. There was one Ridolphi, a Florentine gentleman,† who long resided at London upon pretence of trade; to him he sends to prosecute his business diligently, and stir up all the discontented spirits of the kingdom against her, which he did with great industry, and too much effect. Spain is heartily engaged in the plot, and the duke of Norfolk, a person highly favoured by the people, is constituted head of the holy conspiracy, as some of them call it.‡ Pius is so heartily bent upon the execution of the design, that besides large sums of money already remitted, he promises, if need were, to pawn all that the apostolic see was worth, chalices, crosses, and the very clothes to his back; nay, to come himself in person into England too: a very unusual kindness, and such an honour as never had been done this nation before. But while the matter was thus zealously carrying on, and all things in readiness, and Philip and he had swallowed the whole kingdom in conceit, on a sudden all their hopes are most unluckily dashed; the whole treaty is unexpectedly discovered by an unknown hand from beyond the seas; the duke is taken, and receives the ordinary and just reward of a traitor. How his holiness was affected with this miscarriage, may be easily guessed; the king of Spain lamented it mightily to Cardinal Alessandrino, the pope’s nephew; he thought there never was a neater and better begun plot in the world, and that the queen might have been surprised with a few men from Flanders, and the business gone beyond recovery, before the news could get into France. But the greater, and the nearer the danger was, the greater must her happiness be, that so narrowly escaped it.

* Cambd. ann. 1570

† Girolamo. Catena. Vit. di Pio V. p. 113, &c. Gabut. de Vit. et Rebus gestis Pii Quinti. lib. iii. cap. 9.

‡ “Capo della santa conjura. Caten. Pic Conspirantium.”—*Gabut.*

I will only add to this, the wonderful success of 1588.* The Spaniards had all the advantages imaginable on their side; they exceeded us much both in the bulk and number of their ships, and all manner of naval provisions; they prided themselves in the multitude, experience, and hardiness of their soldiers: but yet when their *invincible armada*, as they vainly called it, came to be engaged, they are worsted by the English in many encounters, and at length, after the loss of many of their principal vessels of war, and a great slaughter of men, they are forced to fly, and take their course through the rough northern seas, at a very unseasonable time of the year, where many more perish by tempest. And when the poor remains of this mighty fleet were arrived at last, shattered and torn, on the coast of Spain, many of those that had escaped the fury of the waves, and the shot of the enemy, are taken away by a great mortality (occasioned, probably, by grief or shame, or the hardships they endured in this miserable expedition), almost as soon as they were come ashore, in nothing more fortunate than their companions, that had been buried in the ocean, but only that they found a grave in their own country. Cardinal Bentivoglio having given a full relation of the whole matter, reflects very sensibly upon it, and tells us,† that “there have been few other designs that were ever longer in the projecting, few carried on with greater preparations, and, it may be, not any after all more unhappy in the execution.” Historians of all sides are perfectly agreed as to the event; but those that are unwilling to give the English valour and conduct any part of its just commendation, impute the victory to the winds and weather only, and it is readily granted, that the catholic armada suffered very much by them. But that, and the death of Sancta Cruz, and some other occurrences that might be named, are an undeniable argument that the divine providence appeared visibly for the preservation of the protestant religion: for this was looked upon as a holy war, and many offered themselves to serve in it upon that account. Sixtus Quintus, then

* Cambr. ann. 1588. Grot. Hist. de Reb. Belg. lib. i. Thuan. lib. lxxxix. Strada, Dec. 2. lib. ix. Bentivoglio della guerra di Flandra, pt. ii. lib. iv.

† “Poche altre imprese furono mai piu lungamente premeditate. Poche altre con piu grande apparecchio disposte; e niuna forse con infelicità maggiore poi eseguite.”

pope, promoted it vigorously, and talked of paying vast sums of money towards it; but all the importunity that could be used could never persuade him to part with one farthing by way of advance; yet to show his good will, he assisted very freely in another way. He renewed the sentence his predecessors had passed against the queen, deposed her from her royal dignity and estate, cursed her and all that should dare to be obedient to her, and very kindly gave away all her dominions at once. And in prosecution of his noble designs, he sent Dr. Allen a cardinal's cap, and intended to make him his legate here in England to settle all, and reconcile the nation to the church of Rome. These things were so well known, that Strada the Jesuit, after a narrative of this lamentable overthrow, for fear it should be made use of to the disadvantage of his catholic cause, as if Almighty God had manifestly favoured the heretics, in the conclusion of all, effectually confutes this last note of Bellarmine's; for when he had intimated what an unhappiness it was to the queen and her subjects, that they had not the good luck to be conquered, as the pope and the Spaniard had most lovingly designed, he tells us that "the English could not, therefore, boast they were the more holy, because they had been the more fortunate; unless perhaps they should think the misbelief of the Saracens and Turks were to be preferred before the christian religion, because in many successful engagements, they had often defeated the forces which the Christians had with much labour brought together."* To this we willingly agree, and are glad that our cause does not stand in need of such weak supports; but then if good success will not be allowed to make for us, when it is on our side, there can be no reason it should be brought as an argument against us, when it happens to be on theirs.

After this it would be superfluous to reckon up any more of queen Elizabeth's felicities; he that would undertake to recount them all, must write the history of her reign; and whoever is acquainted with that, will find it true what Anne D'Est, duchess of Guise and Nemours, (to whose house the queen had been no friend) was wont ingenuously to acknowledge, "that she was the

* "Neque se magis pios venditare potuerint, quia fortunatiores fuere; nisi forte," &c.

most glorious and fortunate woman that ever swayed a sceptre.”* This testimony, which was given her by so great a person, that could not possibly be suspected of flattery, is very considerable; but the character that was bestowed upon her by king James I., some time before he succeeded her in the throne, is greater than this, and more to be valued, because of the impartiality and wisdom of the royal author. His words concerning her are these: “There is a lawful queen there [in England] presently reigning, who hath so long with so great wisdom and felicity governed her kingdoms, as (I must in true sincerity confess) the like hath not been read nor heard, either in our time, or since the days of the Roman emperor Augustus.”† The authority of so great and wise a prince may be enough not only to secure her memory from the malicious attempts of envious trifling pens, but to put the happiness and prosperity of her government out of question. And if Bellarmine’s Note of Temporal Felicity might be suffered to take place, her example alone would be sufficient to prove the church of England the true church; and the imputations of heresy and schism, which are wont to be urged with so much clamour, must by consequence be retorted upon his.

But I hope I have showed that this can be no note; that if it were, the instances he has brought do not prove what he would have; and that others may be pleaded as plausibly for the contrary side. And indeed any that considers it, must needs wonder, that the Cardinal’s mind should be so blinded with worldly success and greatness, or whatever it were, as to cause him in the last place, where we might have expected his greatest strength, to put in such a frivolous note, that may be easily turned a thousand several ways; that will fit the Alcoran, as well as the council of Trent; and at best makes his church altogether as various and uncertain, as the fortune of war.

I should here have made an end, but that I have met with a late writer that undertakes to show the use and great moment of the notes of the church, &c. And he tells us (p. 1), that “Cardinal Bellarmine (after others) hath, to very good purpose, lent his helping hand, to show us the city on a hill, and hath given us marks which one would think carry majesty in their faces;” and

* Thuan. lib. cxxix.

† King James’s Works, p. 147.

awhile after (p. 3), he imagines that "the author of the Discourse concerning the notes of the church, durst not let them pass by us in their majestic train, lest his reader, with Saba's queen, should be dazzled at the glory, transported as she was, that there was no life in her : for," says he, "they seem to a single, not malignant eye, even triumphant notes of the militant church." And then he leads them out in great state, as he thinks (p. 4). As first, "Let me have leave to reckon them (ay, with all my heart ; well then :) the name Catholic, how sacred to all those who own any of the three creeds really and veritably ! The second, its Antiquity : how indubitable, and above all suspicion of novelty !" And so he goes on, and shows them all in good order, till he comes to the last three, and there he draws the curtain, as if he were afraid any body should see their majestic faces. "To say nothing concerning the Confession of Adversaries, and unhappy Exits of the Church's Enemies," (p. 5.) Here are two of the number, which he does but just give us a little glimpse of, and then pops them away presently out of sight ; but poor Temporal Felicity is served worst of all ; it has not the honour to be so much as named, he has not bestowed one syllable upon it, though I take it to be as triumphant a note as any of the rest. But for all that, it was cunningly done to drop it ; for he could not choose but be aware, that the heretics might sometimes pretend to a share of it. Now when he had given us such a view of the "majestic train," as he thought fit, he concludes the paragraph with an artificial *epiphonema*, adorned with a very pathetical ingemination : "These, these are the notes, which (like a bill in parliament) deserve (what?) a second reading." Parturiunt montes ! O the virtue of Butler's rhetoric ! But really I am afraid, that "these, these notes, these triumphant notes," as they are by him drawn up, would be so far from being thought worthy of a second reading, that they would certainly be thrown out of the house. However, I have looked steadily upon them more than once, as they are represented by him, and as they are laid down in the Cardinal's original ; and I have not yet been able to discover "the majesty one would think they carry in their faces," but in my opinion some of their faces would have been a great deal better, if they had had any foreheads. I have carefully beheld "their majestic train" in its

full length, and yet never fell in a swoon, with Saba's queen; nay, I have not had so much as the least qualm of fear or admiration upon me; and my eyes were so far from being "dazzled" at the sight, that they were no more affected than if I had looked on a piece of green silk. But I doubt he will censure them very hardly for it, and think they are a sort of malignant cavalierish eyes. I cannot help that; but whatever eyes they be, since I have been able to hold them open so long against the glaring imaginary splendour of "these, these triumphant notes," I will venture to draw out the whole train once more, and give a little remark upon every one of them as they pass by.

1. *The Name of Catholic or Universal*:—This is a note which may be easily usurped by every bold pretender; but till it can be proved that it is joined with the profession of the true faith, the name alone is nothing but an empty and insignificant sound.

2. *Antiquity*:—I shall not here mention the antiquity of some errors, nor that there were many churches in the world before there was any at Rome, but will freely confess that that had been ancient enough, if it had preserved that doctrine in its purity, which it received at the first; but it is well known that the additions she has made unto that, concerning infallibility, images, purgatory, and the like, cannot be pretended to be of ancient and apostolical tradition. Nay, many of their present tenets were never declared necessary till the last age; and the *church of Rome*, as it is now constituted, can be esteemed *no older than the council of Trent*; that is, about *forty years younger than the Reformation*.

3. *Duration*:—By this the Cardinal would persuade us, that his true church has been from the beginning, and shall continue to the end of Christianity. The first we deny; the second can never be proved till the day of judgment. We are sure the church of Rome has been changed already from what it was; and we hope and believe that it will be changed again from what it is, and then what would become of the duration they boast of, if they should ever reform themselves from those errors and abuses which have crept in among them, as has been often attempted, and for a long time most earnestly desired by many of the best and most impartial of their own communion? So that granting

this to be a note, it would make against them both ways; for what is past, we know what alterations have been made by them; and they can never be secured against others that may happen hereafter.

4. *Amplitude, or Multitude and Variety of Believers*:—This can by no means be made a note of the church; for the time was once that Christ's flock was a little flock (Acts i. 15), "and the number of the names together were but about one hundred and twenty." And afterwards the Arian heresy had almost overspread the face of Christendom; insomuch that the whole world was thought to be against Athanasius, and Athanasius against the whole world; or should we let it pass for a note, they could gain but little by it, for they are infinitely exceeded in multitude, not only by heathens and Mahometans, but by Christians of other denominations.

5. *Succession of Bishops*:—How far this may be necessary to the being of a church, I need not dispute; but the *uninterrupted succession* they of Rome are wont to glory in, is manifestly false: for besides the long vacancies that have sometimes happened, and the many schisms they have had, when two or more have pretended to the papacy, and no man could determine who had the right, which must make it dubious; the confessed heretics that have possessed themselves of the infallible chair, must quite cut off, at least interrupt, the succession. Or, if they have it, notwithstanding this, or any other objection that might be made, we of the church of England can plead the same.

6. *Agreement in Doctrine with the primitive Church*:—This is a good note indeed, if they mean the *truly primitive* church, for that agreed with the Scripture and doctrine of the apostles; but then I hope they will not have the confidence to affirm, that their prayers in an unknown tongue, their half-communion, their adoration of the host, and many other things which they now receive, are agreeable to the practice and belief of that primitive church.

7. *The Union of Members among themselves, and with the Head*:—Of this they are continually making their brags, but the many and violent contentions that have often been betwixt the several pretenders to the papal dignity, and the endless feuds and

animosities that are kept up amongst them about many controverted points, do sufficiently declare that their church has been rent and torn with factions and intestine divisions, as much as any other society: or if they were as firmly *united*, as they pretend, it is *no more than other combinations* of men have been, in known and *wicked errors*.

8. *Sanctity of Doctrine*:—For they generally assert, as the Cardinal does here, that the Roman church maintains nothing that is false, either in matters of faith or morals. If they were able to prove this, there might be some reason indeed that their church should be esteemed the mother and mistress of all churches, as she has been wont of late to style herself; but since the power of deposing princes has been openly assumed, and frequently practised, and never yet condemned by any, either pope or council; since the doctrine of *equivocation*, and many other absurd and impious opinions are taught by their casuists, and made use of by their confessors, in directing the consciences of their penitents; and since these, and many more very dangerous errors, do not only escape without a censure, but are approved of, and encouraged by their governors; I do not see how they and their church can possibly be excused from the guilt of them.

9. *The Efficacy of Doctrine*:—Here we are told of the wonderful success they have had in the propagation of their faith, and the conversions that have been made of whole nations; and supposing it were as they say, yet heresy and infidelity have often had as great and swift a progress in the world, as any that their doctrine can boast of; and considering the pravity and corruption of human nature, it is not strange, that the most gross and pernicious errors should be more readily received, and spread faster, than the most divine and sacred truths.

10. *Holiness of Life*:—This is indeed the most real commendation of a Christian, and I will not go about to rob them of the glory of it; but then it cannot be denied, but mere philosophers, and some of the ancient, and many of those whom they account modern heretics, have been of a very strict and unblameable conversation; and divers of their popes, and other ecclesiastics of the greatest eminency of place, have been very infamous for all sorts of wickedness and debauchery; and their

very religious orders have been very often complained of, for the neglect of their discipline, and the looseness of their lives, as is abundantly testified by their own authors.

11. *The Glory of Miracles*:—These alone were never a note of the true church; and those extraordinary gifts which were bestowed at first, for the confirmation of Christianity, we think have ceased long ago. But we are forewarned of “false Christs, and false prophets, which should show great signs and wonders,” (Matt. xxiv. 24); which methinks should make a church very careful how they made any pretension to miracles. But the church of Rome is resolved to do it, and would fain persuade us, that there are many great ones wrought among them to this very day, and, as they believe, always will be; but we know, and they will not deny it, that many of the miracles they have talked of are mere forgeries and delusions; others altogether incredible, and but weakly attested, and wholly unworthy of the seriousness and gravity of the christian religion; most of them said to be done in corners, and are never to be seen but among themselves. When they please to oblige us protestants with the sight of a few of them, they may then deserve to be farther considered; till that be done, they must give us leave to think that their church is reduced to great straits, when it shall stand in need of such slight artifices as these to support it.

12. *The Light of Prophecy*:—This, if they had it, can bring no more advantage to their cause than the other. The church of God anciently, when extraordinary revelations were more common, had not always prophets in it; and when any appeared, the prophet was to be tried by the faith of the church, and not the church by the predictions of the prophet. And we are still commanded “to try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world,” 1 John iv. 1.

13. *The Confession of Adversaries*:—This, if the Cardinal's instances were pertinent, would yet be but of little consequence; for if some protestants have spoken favourably of his catholics, some of his catholics have spoken favourably of protestants. Or if we should be willing to hope well of some of them, as we are, and if they should adjudge us every one to eternal damnation, as they generally do, this would be but an ill sign that their church

must, therefore, be the truer, because it is more censorious and uncharitable than ours.

14. *The unhappy End of the Church's Enemies*:—A wise man would be something afraid of passing this into a note, before he was himself safe in his grave. "For all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked," Eccl. ix. 2. Many of the most zealous patrons of the Romish persuasion have met with as tragical and unfortunate ends as the most accursed heretic that ever was devoured by vermin, or burnt at a stake.

15. *Temporal Felicity*:—This may be placed in the same rank with the former; it is altogether as variable and inconstant as that; no certain judgment can be made upon it. They are not now to learn that the enemies of their church have been often successful, and that victory has not always waited upon their catholic arms; no, not in their most holy wars, when religion has been the only ground of the quarrel.

Thus upon a review of all the Notes in order, as they are mustered up by the great Cardinal, it may appear to any unprejudiced inquirer, that he has missed of his aim; for that they are either no notes of a church at all, or not proper to that of Rome.

And now after the highest pretences of an infallible church, and the absolute deference and submission which they say is due to it, any man that shall seriously consider the matter, must needs wonder, they should have no surer means at last to find it out, than a few slight and improbable, nay, some of them, very vain, false, and extravagant conjectures. The protestants, whom they will not allow to be certain of any thing, have far better evidences than these, and as good assurances of the truth of their church as can be desired; for we think the true faith, true worship, and a right administration of the sacraments, do unquestionably make a true church. These the Romanists themselves cannot deny to be the great and necessary notes; and if the controversy betwixt us come to be determined by these, it will soon appear which communion we ought to prefer.

We make profession of the whole catholic apostolic faith, as it is contained in the holy Scriptures, and briefly comprised in the three creeds; which is all that was ever received in the primitive

church. They have made large additions to the ancient belief, and increased the number of the articles from twelve to four-and-twenty; many of which were not so much as heard of in the first ages, and never made necessary to be believed, till about fifteen hundred years after the publication of the gospel.

We worship Almighty God, and none but him, and unto him we pray in *a language we understand*, through Jesus Christ our only mediator, in whose name when we ask, we are sure to be heard. They have a kind of worship which they give to *saints and images*, which as to all external acts of adoration, is the *very same they pay to God himself*; and when their addresses are directed unto him, all their public service is in *an unknown tongue*; and they set up to themselves *many mediators* of intercession, when they cannot tell whether they hear them, but it is most certain that God has never promised to hear them for their sakes.

We receive *the two* sacraments which Christ hath ordained in his church, and administer them both in such manner and form as he has appointed. They, without any divine authority, have made *seven* sacraments; and in the Lord's supper they believe that there is offered up a proper propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; they adore the elements, which they think are transubstantiated into the body and blood of our Saviour, and suffer the laity to communicate but in *one* kind, robbing them of the cup, contrary to the plain institution, and express command of our blessed Lord.

And since we have the true faith, true worship, and the sacraments rightly administered, it is evident that we are not deficient in any thing that is necessary to the constitution of a true church; but they will never be able to prove themselves such a one, by the late additions they have made to the creed, and their many deviations from the primitive rule. And yet they will be continually vaunting that they are not only a true church, but the only true church in the world; and upon this presumption they thunder out their anathemas upon all Christendom besides, and confidently condemn them for a company of heretical and schismatical conventicles. But they cannot justify that rash and uncharitable sentence, nor make good any part of this heavy charge; for we

that heartily believe all *the ancient creeds*, cannot be accused of heresy, neither are we guilty of schism, because we only reformed those errors and corruptions which they had introduced, and wanted not sufficient authority for what was done. But if they are still absolutely resolved to stand to the censure they have passed, and allow no true church upon earth but their own, it is not Cardinal Bellarmine's Fifteen Notes that will ever prove it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

THE FOURTEENTH NOTE.

THE UNHAPPY END OF THE CHURCH'S ENEMIES.

	PAGE
What Bellarmine means by an unhappy end	327
This intended by him not barely as a Note of a Church, but of that which is the <i>only true</i> Church	<i>ibid.</i>
The instances he produces of unhappy deaths, are for the most part not pertinent	327, 328
The unhappy end of those who defend it must be a Note of a false Church, if the unhappy end of those who oppose it be a Note of the true	328
From God's judgments against particular persons, nothing can be concluded against that Church of which they are members	<i>ibid.</i>
This, therefore, is no Note of a true Church, as being contrary,	
1st. To Scripture	329, 330
2d. To daily observation and the history of the foregoing ages	330, 331
3d. To the principles of reason	331—333
This proceeds in five particulars:	
Suppose it be a Note of the true Church, the Protestant will be found to be the true Church, rather than the Popish	334
This will be evident by comparing the deaths of their prime members and zealous champions, and then considering on which side we find the greater number of unnatural and uncommon deaths	<i>ibid.</i>
Protestant bishops and other eminent protestant pastors, without number, have died the most happy deaths	<i>ibid.</i>
The number of eminent Protestants who have met with unhappy ends very few—five only mentioned by Bellarmine	335
Misrepresentations of the deaths of—	
Luther	335—337
Zuingilius	338
Eccolampadius	<i>ibid.</i>
Carolostadius	338, 339
Calvin	339—345
No mention made by him of any unhappy ends of those princes who had been great defenders of the protestant faith, because he could not produce such instances	345

	PAGE
Several dismal ends of Romish Cardinals, and especially of Popes .	346, 347
The unhappy deaths of several popish princes	348
The advantage, therefore, of this Note is on the protestant side. . .	<i>ibid.</i>

THE FIFTEENTH NOTE.

TEMPORAL FELICITY.

This Note, even in Bellarmine's opinion, liable to many exceptions, and therefore, at once, to prevent them all, he asserts that catholic princes never adhered heartily to God, but that they triumphed easily over their enemies 351

The absurdity of this shown under three heads:—

- I. *Head.* This cannot be esteemed a Note of the Church :
 1. Because God has nowhere promised it in all the gospel 352
 2. Because for several ages together the Church could not pretend to any such thing as Temporal Felicity 353
 3. Because of the miseries which the Church of God must endure in the days of Antichrist. 354

II. *Head.* The historical passages produced by the Cardinal for this Note do not prove what he intends 354—356

Great partiality made use of in the choice of his instances 355

The story of Rhadagaisus, and his son's death, and the defeat of the army of the Goths by Honorius considered. 355, 356

The history of the Albigenses, who were eventually successful, related, 357, 358

The victory of Charles V. neither a miracle, nor cause of boast . . 359, 360

III. *Head.* Many examples of infidels and heretics who have been as prosperous as any catholics can pretend to. 360

The history of Uladislaus, king of Poland and Hungary 360, 361

The unfortunate battle of Mohatz 361

The prosperous reign of queen Elizabeth, the bulwark of Protestantism. 361—366

The author of "The Use and great Moment of the Notes of the Church" reflected on 367

The recapitulation and conclusion of the whole work:—

The name Catholic—Antiquity—Duration 368

Amplitude—Succession of Bishops—Agreement in Doctrine with the Primitive Church—Union of Members among themselves, and with the Head 369

Sanctity of Doctrine—Efficacy of Doctrine—Holiness of Life 370

Glory of Miracles—Light of Prophecy—The Confession of Adversaries. 371

The Unhappy End of the Church's Adversaries—Temporal Felicity . 372, 373





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